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THE DESERT OF THE EXODUS.

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THE

DESERT OF THE EXODUS

JOURNEYS ON FOOT IN THE WILDERNESS OF THE FORTY YEARS' WANDERINGS

UNDERTAKEN IN CONNEXION WITH THE ORDNANCE SURVEY OF SINAI
AND THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND,

BY

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WITH MAPS AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND
DRAWINGS TAKEN ON THE SPOT BY THE SINAI SURVEY
EXPEDITION, AND C. F. TYRWHITT DRAKE.

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PART II.

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THE DESERT OF THE EXODUS.

PART II.

THE DESERT OF THE EXODUS.

PART II.

THE FORTY YEARS' WANDERINGS.

CHAPTER I.

THE DESERT AND ITS INHABITANTS.

Return to the East. General description; The Tíh; The "Negeb" or South-Country. The Teyáhah Bedawín; their character; mode of life; plundering excursions. Other Arab tribes. Agriculture as a means of civilising the Bedawín.

After a few months' rest in England, I found myself once more bound for the East, but this time under very different circumstances to those which had attended my first visit to Sinai. The Palestine Exploration Fund, ever anxious to promote a better knowledge of the Holy Land, had entrusted to me the task of exploring that wide and comparatively unknown tract of Desert which lies between Judæa and the Sinaitic Peninsula, and my companion, Mr C. F. Ṭyrwhitt-Drake, had been commissioned by the University of Cambridge to accompany me for the purpose of reporting upon the natural history of the country, and collecting specimens of its plants and fauna.

And here I must make a confession: when I began writing these pages, I determined not to obtrude my own private sentiments into them. But, when a man has lived alone with another for ten months in one small tent, and that other, in hunger, danger, fatigue and illness, has always proved the same cheery companion and hearty co-operator, he may be pardoned if he cannot introduce his fellow-traveller's name without some mark of affectionate remembrance and esteem.

Before asking my readers to accompany us upon our journey, I will say a few words about "the great and terrible wilderness," which was to be the field of our exploration.

The scenes of the Exodus undoubtedly took place in that desert region which is called by the appropriate name of Arabia Petræa, or the Stony. This includes, besides the Sinaitic Peninsula, the Bádiet et Tíh (literally signifying "the Desert of the Wanderings"), and some portion of Idumæa and Moab.

The desert of Et Tíh is a limestone plateau of irregular surface, the southern portion of which projects wedge-wise into the Sinaitic Peninsula. It is bounded on the north by the Mediterranean Sea and the Mountains of Judah; on the west by the Isthmus of Suez; and on the east by the 'Arabah, that large valley or depression which runs between the Gulf of 'Akabah and the Dead Sea.

The Tíh, though crossed by the Hajj, or Pilgrim, route to Mecca, and frequently traversed by those persons who prefer to approach Palestine by the "Long Desert," had been but very imperfectly described and never systematically explored, while the whole of the mountain district was absolutely unknown. And yet this country is of the highest interest to Biblical students, for across that white unpromising waste lay the road down into Egypt on which Jacob travelled to visit his long-lost son, and along the same way the Virgin Mother fled with her Divine Child; here, as the name still reminds us, the Children of Israel wandered; and the hilly plateau on the north-east was the home and pasture ground of the Patriarchs.

The southern edge, which, as just now remarked, projects wedge-wise into the Sinaitic Peninsula, terminates in a long cliff or escarpment, steep and abrupt on the south-western side, and gradually falling away towards the south-east. Near the head of Wády Gharandel it meets the sandstone belt which crosses the northern portion of Sinai, and descends in broken masses of hills nearly to the sea shore. The remainder is an almost continuous cliff rising above open plains of sand and gravel; it is, however, broken by a few valleys, and practicable at certain points by low *nagbs* or mountain passes. For about the first twenty miles southward from Suez it takes the name of Jebel er Ráhah; from this to the apex of the triangle it is called Jebel et Tíh; and the south-eastern side is known as Jebel el 'Ejmeh. The last two portions of the escarpment are separated by a deep valley, Wády es Síg, near the head of which is situated the Nagb Emreikheh, the principal pass on to the plateau, and that by which the Bedawín most frequently cross from Sinai to Nakhl. A little to the east of this pass the cliff attains its highest point. The other practicable passes are Er Rákineh and Wursáh in Jebel et Tíh, and Nagb el Mírád in Jebel el 'Ejmeh, which last we were the first to make known to European geographers. The surface of the plateau itself is an arid featureless waste, its monotony relieved only by a few isolated mountain groups, amongst which the most conspicuous are Jebels Yeleg, Ikhrimm and Helál. It is drained for the most part by Wády el 'Arísh, which takes its rise in the highest portion of the southern cliff, and flows northwards towards the Mediterranean, being joined in its course by several large valleys flowing down from Jebel el 'Ejmeh, and by the system of watercourses which come down from the hilly country in the north-east. These wádies, although sufficiently distinct near the mountains in which they take their rise, meander over the plain without making any perceptible difference in the level of the ground, their course being for the most part only marked by a scanty line of vegetation, which imparts a sickly green colour to the soil.

Wády el 'Arísh is "the river of Egypt" mentioned by Isaiah (xxvii, 12), and others of the Sacred Writers, as forming the southern frontier of Palestine. The appellation is singularly appropriate from the point of view of one dwelling in Palestine, for the only direct road from Judæa to Egypt was across the Desert of the Tíh by this very valley, and it might well be regarded as the River of Egypt, inasmuch as it separates that country from the Holy Land. The original Hebrew is *Nakhl Mizraim,* and the name is still perpetuated in the fort of Nakhl, situated in the centre of the Tíh, at the point where the road to Gaza and Hebron branches off from the Darb el Hajj, or Pilgrim route to Mecca viâ 'Akabah.

The country is nearly waterless, with the exception of a few springs situated in the larger wádies; but even here water can only be obtained by scraping small holes or pits (called *themáïl*) in the ground, and baling it out with the hand. All that is obtained by the process is a yellowish solution which baffles all attempts at filtering. Our own plan during our journey in the Tíh was to measure out each day a small quantity from our water-barrel, and to put it by in a basin to settle. About half was usually available for making tea, and the rest was an almost solid cake of mud.

The ground is for the most part hard and unyielding, and is covered in many places with a carpet of small flints, which are so worn and polished by the fine detritus that is being constantly blown over them as to resemble pieces of black glass.

In spite of the utterly arid nature of the soil, a quantity of brown parched herbage is scattered over the surface, and affords excellent fuel for the campfire. During the greater part of the year this remains to all appearances burnt up and dead, but, as

I have before remarked in the case of the Sinai Desert, it burst into sudden life with the spring and winter rains. The dry and sapless shrubs are covered with snails, which, having attached themselves to the twigs in their moister days, hermetically seal up the orifice of their shells, and calmly wait through all the fierce summer heat for the returning rains. Various species of lichens too are found adhering to every rock and scattered boulder, even in the dryest spots and where most exposed to the sun's burning rays.

In the larger wádies, draining as they do so extensive an area, a very considerable amount of moisture infiltrates through the soil, producing much more vegetation than in the plains. Sufficient pasturage for the camels is always to be had in these spots, and here and there a few patches of ground are even available for cultivation.

Besides the accurate determination of the mountains and wády-systems, the Tíh itself presents but few features of interest to the explorer. There are no ruins, no signs of former habitation or fertility, at least within a historic period, though the numerous stone circles and cairns which are found, especially in the hilly portions of the country, bear record of an extensive primeval population.

But the mountain plateau in the north-east is full of interest both to the geographer and to the Biblical student. This plateau is called Jebel el Magráh, and is about seventy miles in length, and from forty to fifty miles broad, commencing at Jebel

'Araif and extending northward by a series of steps or terraces to within a short distance of Beersheba, from which it is separated by Wády er Rakhmeh from the mountains of the same name. It projects into the Tíh much in the same way as the Tíh projects into Sinai, and, like it, also terminates in steep escarpments towards the south, falling away to a lower level on the south-eastern side.

On the west it is chiefly drained by two main valleys, Wády Garaiyeh and Wády el Abyadh, which ultimately combine their streams, and flowing into Wády el 'Arísh are carried on to the Mediterranean. On the east, Wády Ghamr and Wády Marreh receive the greater part of the water-supply and bear it down the 'Arabah into the Dead Sea.

The southern portion of Jebel el Magráh is much more barren than the rest, and possesses but few ruins, though primeval stone remains of various kinds are found there in great numbers. After about the first twenty-five miles the whole character of the country changes; broad valleys intersect the plateau on either side, and signs of former habitation and fertility become more and more abundant. The principal valleys are Wádies Hanein and El Abyadh on the western side, and Wády Marreh with its tributaries on the eastern. It is in the *seils* and debouchures of the valleys on the western edge that the chief objects of interest are found. In Wádies Garaiyeh, Lussán, El 'Ain and Muweileh, and in the neighbourhood of Jebel 'Araif we meet with the *hazeroth* or fenced enclosures of a pastoral people, probably the Amalekites, who, we know, must have inhabited this region at the time of the Exodus. Here also, in a steep ravine on the edge of the plateau, is situated ‘Ain Gadís; and the wide open plain beneath it was no doubt, as the name suggests, the Wilderness of Kadesh—the starting point of the Forty Years' Wanderings, and one of the most important sites in the desert.

Further north we reach the ruins of El Birein, El ‘Aujeh, Meshrifeh, Sebaita and ‘Abdeh; and if we are at a loss to identify the locality, the frequently recurring names ʺAmir, ʺAmerí, ʺAmerín, furnish us with a clue, and we recognise in these once fertile and populous mountains the Hill Country of the Amorites, where Israel made the first and unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the frontier of the Promised Land. Meshrifeh and Sebaita can be almost certainly identified with the Zephath of the Bible; ‘Abdeh is the Eboda of the Peutinger Tables, an old Roman station with a still older Hebrew name; and the other sites represent no doubt some of those ancient cities mentioned in that "Domesday Book of "Palestine," as it has been well called, the Book of Joshua.

Proceeding still further northward, we have, amongst other important sites, Ruheibeh, Shutneh and Bir Sebá,—the wells of Rehoboth, Sitnah and Beersheba, which Abraham and Isaac dug. After this point, ruined cities and Scripture names are met with in quick succession, the hills are no longer bleak and bare, the fields and terraces are covered with corn and vines: we leave the desert, at last, behind us and enter the mountains of Judæa.

On the eastern side the mountain plateau is less fruitful in natural or traditional interest. On the south-east it is drained by a system of valleys concentrating in Wády Ghamr; but for the next thirty miles northward it descends for the most part abruptly into the 'Arabah, and its surface is a mere desolate mass of rolling hills which could never have afforded facilities for the establishment of a settled population. After this, we approach the southern edge of the Dead Sea, the western shore of which is sufficiently well known; moreover the description of this sea (or region) belongs more properly to the geographer of Palestine.

From a common watershed in the ridge of Jebel Magráh, Wády el Abyadh flows westward and Wády Maderah towards the east. The last mentioned wády divides the north-eastern portion of the plateau from a third terrace, which rises precipitously for about a thousand feet, and is traversed by the passes of Yemen, Sufáh and Fikreh.

The southernmost and central portion of the plateau is inhabited by the 'Azázimeh Bedawín, one of the poorest and most degraded of Arab tribes. They are superstitious, violent, and jealous of intrusion upon their domain, suspecting all strangers of sinister designs upon their lives and property. To examine the country and wrest from them the secrets of its topography and nomenclature, when the use of a prismatic compass exposes you to execration as a sorcerer, and when to ask the simplest question is to proclaim yourself a spy, is, as our own experience has taught us, neither an easy nor an agreeable task.

The S'aidíyeh and Dhallám occupy the mountains to the north-west, the Jehalín the north-eastern corner and the country to the south-west of the Dead Sea. Although Jebel Magráh has been so long unknown, it was at one time the scene of a busy traffic, and caravans of merchandize from Gaza and Hebron passed through it on their way to Arabia. We ourselves not only found traces of these ancient roads both in the valleys on the west and running through the heart of the range itself, but we also discovered several ruined forts and roadside stations which indicated an organized system of transport on a very extensive scale.

This mountain plateau is the Negeb or "South Country" of Scripture. As a geographical term, the name has been entirely ignored in the English version, where the word Negeb is invariably translated "the south;" and the misapprehension has given rise to several absurd contradictions in terms. Thus, when the spies went up from Kadesh, we are told that "Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain;" "and they ascended *by the south* and came unto Hebron" (Num. xiii. 17, 22). As Hebron certainly lay to the north of Kadesh, this express mention of the *south* is not only meaningless but inaccurate, but, if we render the word "South-country," applying it to the mountain plateau in the north-west corner of the Tíh, all difficulty vanishes, and the words of the text are geographically exact. In Joshua x, 40, 41 there is a similar anomaly: "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills and *of the south*...smote them from Kadesh Barnea even unto Gaza," which would be inexplicable if we regarded the word as a mere compass point. If further confirmation were needed, we might cite: "And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the *south*" (Num. xxi. 1); and the frequent mention of the road to Egypt by way of "the south" is proof that the word should be always translated, as indeed it is in Genesis xx. 1, "the South-country," that is the land lying to the south of Palestine*.

The Teyáhah who occupy the central portion of the great desert of Et Tíh are a large and powerful tribe of Arabs; their country produces scarcely any grain, and they are therefore compelled to purchase all the necessaries of life from Gaza or some of the border villages of Palestine. Their camels furnish them with the means of subsistence, as they are employed in conveying the Hajj or Pilgrim caravan across the desert to ʻAkabah on its way from Egypt to Mecca, and they have also the right of conducting those travellers who select the long desert route to Palestine. Such of them as are not fortunate enough to participate in this traffic live almost entirely on the milk of their sheep and camels, occasionally selling one of the latter, if this resource fail from drought or other causes. In many other parts of the desert, milk forms the sole article of diet obtainable by the Bedawín; and I have heard a well-authenticated case of an Arab in the north of Syria who for three years had not tasted either water or solid food. So long as the flocks and herds can find an abundance of succulent herbage, they can dispense to a great extent with drink; an Arab, therefore, in selecting a spot for his encampment, regards the existence of a good supply of pasturage as of much greater importance than the proximity of water. Only the Bedawín of the mountainous districts engage in anything like agricultural pursuits, they therefore alone consider a spring of water as a positive necessity: to the Bedawín of the plains, this is indispensable only when they are making a long journey with a laden beast. We can thus understand with what anxiety an Arab watches for the few and scanty showers of rain, without which he is in absolute danger of starvation; and we may pardon him if he even conceives a superstitious jealousy of such proceedings as geographical or astronomical observations; a compass, theodolite or sextant, he naturally concludes, is an uncanny and magical instrument, and neither his sky nor his soil are sufficiently tractable in their present condition to justify him in allowing them to be tampered with.

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* The late Mr Wilton (" The Negeb, " by Rev. E. Wilton, London, 1863) was one of the first to call attention to this important distinction.

The ancient Arabs prided themselves upon three things, Eloquence, Hospitality and Plundering. From the Teyáheh tribe the first two qualities have entirely disappeared, but they are still unrivalled for their daring and persistence in making raids and carrying off their neighbours' cattle. Their hereditary victims are the 'Anazeh, one of the largest and most influential of the Bedawín tribes, who occupy the district around Palmyra and to the east of the Haurán. Once at least in every year the Teyáheh collect in force, often mustering as many as 1000 guns, and set off on camels for the country of the 'Anazeh, a distance of more than twenty days' journey. Having chosen for their expedition the season of the year when the camels are sent out to graze, they seldom fail to come across some large herd feeding at a distance from the camp, and watched by a few attendants only. These they drive off, the *Bawárideh,* that is, the men who possess guns, forming a guard on either side and in the rear, and the rest leading the beasts. It sometimes, though rarely, happens that they get off clear with their booty before the owners are aware of the invasion, but in many cases they are hotly pursued, and compelled to relinquish their prey and take to their heels. In the last of these excursions, the Teyáheh carried off more than 600 head of cattle.

In these raids very few lives are lost, as even in their wars the Arabs are chary of shedding blood and so incurring the dreadful curse of the vendetta; wounds, of course, are freely given and received, and there was not one of our own camel-drivers who could not show some disfiguring cut or scar.

Indeed the state of desert society has but little changed since the messenger came in to the tent of Job, and said: "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword." (Job i. 17.)

Robbery is not regarded by the Bedawín as in the least a disgraceful thing, but "a man taketh his sword, and goeth his way to rob and steal" (Esdras iv. 23), with a profound feeling of conscious rectitude and respectability.

The Teyáheh have for their neighbours the Terabín, a numerous tribe, whose territory extends from about 40 miles south-east of Suez, on the Sinai road, as far as Gaza on the north; the Haiwátt, who occupy the mountains west of 'Akabah; and the 'Azázimeh, who inhabit the mountain plateau to the north-west of Nakhl.

The Arabs do occasionally practise agriculture, if sowing a little corn in a roughly-ploughed field, and leaving the irrigation to chance, can be so called, but it never occurs to them to take advantage of the works left them by the former owners of the soil. Agriculture might be made a means of improving the condition of the Arabs: indeed the only other method of attaining this end would be to civilise them off the face of the earth altogether. By Arab I mean the Bedawí, the typical son of Ishmael, "whose hand is against every man," and who is as much hated and feared in the towns and villages of Central Arabia as in Palestine.

I cannot expect respectable and tax-paying Englishmen to enter with much appreciation into the Bedawín question, and I know the prejudice that exists, in this country particularly, against the extinction of a romantic and interesting race. The sympathy already wasted on the Red man of North America warns me that I am treading on delicate ground, but I must nevertheless state my belief that the "noble savage" is a simple and unmitigated nuisance. To the Bedawí this applies even more forcibly still, for, wherever he goes, he brings with him ruin, violence, and neglect. To call him a "son of the desert" is a misnomer; half the desert owes its existence to him, and many a fertile plain from which he has driven its useful and industrious inhabitants becomes in his hands, like the "South Country," a parched and barren wilderness.

Several plans have been tried, from time to time, to make him a respectable member of society, but have signally failed;—missionaries have gone to him, and, so long as they could supply him with tobacco and keep open tent for all comers, have found him sufficiently tractable. But they have made absolutely no impression upon him after all. The Turkish Government once devised a creditable and brilliant scheme, namely, to fill up all the wells in the desert around Palmyra; for a time this kept him out of Syria, and sent him to worry some one else; and so far it answered its purpose. But the Pasha entrusted with the execution of the order planted tamarisk bushes to mark the spots where the water lay, and received a good sum from the ‘Anazeh Arabs for the information which enabled them to recover it.

Ráshid Pasha, one of the most energetic and enlightened officials the Ottoman Empire has ever produced, came near to solving the problem. Shortly after we left the Tíh, he sent word down to Gaza that the Bedawín of those parts must for the future live in huts instead of tents; our friends were acute enough to see that this was a deadly blow aimed at their very existence, and the first fifteen Turkish soldiers who appeared amongst the Teyáhah were killed. A detachment of troops was sent down, and all the flocks and herds were confiscated, brought to Jerusalem, and sold for a nominal value to the Fellahín. The Bedawín sought and obtained the protection of the Viceroy of Egypt, and thus the far-seeing policy of the Governor-General of Syria was thwarted.

If the governments of Egypt, Turkey and Arabia would but act in concert, and consult the real interests of their subjects, this terrible scourge might be removed, and the Fellahín relieved from the constant dread of rapine, and freed from the *sic vos non vobis* misgivings with which they now till their ground. They would then become a more contented and honest people.

I do not advocate a war of extermination against the Bedawín, because I do not think it policy to destroy so much muscle which might be made serviceable to the community, and I have still, even in the days of mitrailleuses, some old fashioned notions about the sacredness of human life, but I would put an end to their existence *quâ* Bedawín. The Bedawí regards the Felláh with unutterable scorn. He has a constitutional dislike to work, and is entirely unscrupulous as to the means he employs to live without it; these qualities (which also adorn and make the thief and burglar of civilization) he mistakes for evidences of thorough breeding, and prides himself accordingly upon being one of Nature's gentlemen.

Camels and sheep are, as I have before said, the Bedawí's only means of subsistence, and so long, then, as he lives his present unsettled life, and can support himself with the milk which they produce, he is independent of all occupation save plundering. The effect of this is that the soil he owns deteriorates, and his neighbours are either driven away or reduced to beggary by his raids and depredations. If the military authorities were to make systematic expeditions against these tribes, and take from them every camel and sheep which they possess, they would no longer be able to roam over the deserts, but would be compelled to settle down to agricultural pursuits or starve. The superior advantages which the peaceful agriculturist would then possess over them would curb their unreasonable pride, and the necessity for keeping pace with him, if they wished to live at all, would bring out the resources of their undoubtedly keen intellects. They might thus be tamed and turned into useful members of the community. Such a plan would probably entail some hardships and injustice at first, but a virulent disease requires a strong remedy, and we must not wince at the application of the cautery to cure the plague.

οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ
θρηνεῖν ἐπῳδὰς πρὸς τομῶντι πήματι.

Following the plan adapted in my former chapters on Sinai, I shall first describe our progress through the country, exhibiting it to the reader in its present physical aspect, and shall thence endeavour to draw some conclusions as to the probable route of the Israelites on leaving Sinai, and the position of some of the hitherto unidentified or disputed sites mentioned in the Bible history.

CHAPTER II.

THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE TÍH.

Start from Suez; our dress and equipment. Scene on landing. Wády 'Amárah and Bir Abu Suweirah. Head of Wády Gharandel. Arab version of the story of Shylock. Wády Wutáh. Another Christmas Day in the Desert. We appear in the character of snake-charmers. Journey from the Convent to 'Ain Hudherah. Jebel 'Arádeh. The Haiwátt Arabs. Wády el 'Ain. 'Ain el 'Elyá; *nawámís*. El Migráh. Wády el Biyár. More primeval remains; arrangement of ancient pastoral camps. Jebel el 'Ejmeh. We enter the Tíh; first impressions. Meeting with a family of Teyáhah Arabs.

On the 16th of December, 1869, we again left the comfortable hotel at Suez, and embarked for the Asiatic side of the Canal.

If the society of that lively town had gazed in amazement at the unusually extensive Caravan with which the Ordnance Survey Expedition had departed for Mount Sinai the previous year, they were absolutely aghast at the equipment with which Drake and I committed ourselves to the mercy of the Wilderness, and there were not wanting those who, as they saw our small boat-load of boxes and

Bedawín push off for the Asiatic side of the Canal, regarded us in the light of harmless lunatics, and looked upon our expedition as little better than suicide. But there were unknown deserts to explore, strange and possibly hostile tribes to encounter, and we judged it best to dispense with all unnecessary baggage; while, as we could work much better on foot, riding-camels would have been a mere useless expense.

Our only escort consisted of the owners of the camels which carried our camp-furniture and provisions, and, these being changed from time to time as we passed from one tribe to another, we may be said to have performed our journey absolutely unattended and alone.

Our equipment consisted of the following articles :—

A tent 12 ft. square, which, on leaving Jerusalem, was changed for one 6 ft. square and 5 ft. in height. Two mattresses and blankets.

Kettle, pot, frying-pan, tin plates, knives, forks, and tin washing-basins.

Tobacco, flour, bacon, onions, tea, sugar, Liebig's extract of meat, and brandy (supply for three months).

These, with our surveying and photographic instruments, clothes, &c. were carried upon four camels. The curious may compare our outfit with the list of articles which the infallible "Murray" pronounces to be absolutely necessary for the desert traveller.

A Dragoman was fortunately needless, as we were both familiar with the "rapid gutturals" in which the Ishmaelite expresses his love, hate, or craving for *bakhshísh,* and, since we numbered the arts of frying bacon and wiping plates amongst our numerous accomplishments, a servant was at once voted unnecessary and a bore.

Our dress consisted of a Syrian suit of brown holland, similar to that worn by the Turkish soldiery, a red scarf, and a thick felt cap and *kefíyeh* or striped handkerchief worn over a head clipped (in the absence of razors) perfectly bald; a dagger, revolver and gun apiece completed the costume. I am willing to admit the justice of the verdict pronounced by a high authority, when, three months later on, we entered Jerusalem somewhat the worse for wear—viz. that two more disreputable figures have seldom been seen even in that holy city.

As might have been expected, we had no sooner landed on the opposite bank of the Canal than our Bedawín improvised a scene. A casual Arab presented himself, and insisted upon his right as one of the Towarah to a share in our patronage; but, as Hassan our former Sheikh had been waiting for a fortnight at Suez, where he had come down expressly to meet us, bringing with him his own men and "my faithful Sálem" amongst the number, he did not receive the proposition in a cordial spirit. Words waxed high, and in the course of a few minutes the disputants had drawn their swords, were fiercely threatening mutual extermination, and were requesting as plainly as looks could speak that somebody acquainted with their temper would hold them back. This kind office Drake and I performed, and by the use of a few mild but opprobrious epithets succeeded in restoring perfect harmony.

The first day's start is always a difficult one, as the loads have to be arranged and the geography of the store-box learned. It was therefore rather late when we got the camels off; but having done so we adjourned to one of the gardens at 'Ayún Músa, where we had encamped, and were entertained by Yúsuf, the proprietor, with coffee and radishes. Taking a final farewell of him and civilisation, we fairly started off again into the desert. The day was very hot, but bright and pleasant, and the sensation of once more breathing pure dry air, combined with the excitement of the work before us, put us in the most hilarious spirits. For the first few hours the ground was well known to us, and there was but little to remark. In Wády Merází we saw a heap of stones which marked the grave of one of the unfortunate Hajj pilgrims, who are so often placed in quarantine near this spot on their return home from Mecca *viâ* Jeda and Tor. As we came through Wády el Ahtha we found that the soil at a particular spot had been recently turned up, disclosing a fine soft clay beneath the surface; this clay contains a great quantity of salt, for the sake of which it had been dug up by some passing Arabs.

Striking down towards the sea-coast, we came to Bir Abu Suweirah, a little pool of very tolerable water: near the well were some Terabín Arabs' tents, and a party of the men were at the spring when we arrived. Both here and down Wády 'Amárah the road lies over an unvaried, flat, and uninteresting desert. There is no other water but this in or near Wády 'Amárah; the determination of this point is important, as the supposition that water did exist there, taken in conjunction with the sound of the name, has led some persons to identify that wády with the Marah of Scripture. The country immediately around the well consists of low hills or mounds covered with scanty desert herbage. Our camp was pitched for the night in Wády Makwan Himádha, which, as the camels had gone on by a shorter path, we did not make until past sunset. A strong wind had been blowing all day, and an unpleasant, blinding sand-storm beat in our faces throughout the latter part of our march.

The survey made by the officers of the Sinai Expedition, and the previous researches of Mr Holland, had left no important part of the Peninsula of Sinai unexplored except the district lying at the head of Wády Gharandel and that immediately beyond 'Ain Hudherah. As a knowledge of these tracts of country was, however, essential to the completion of the map, and especially to the accurate delineation of the outline of the cliffs which form the edge of the Tíh plateau, we determined to begin our explorations from the southern side, in preference to following the usual route from Egypt taken by the Mecca Pilgrim Caravan, which crosses the flat and perfectly uninteresting desert to the west of Nakhl.

The pass of Wády Wutáh, with which valley our reconnaissance survey commenced, was said to be a difficult one; we therefore allowed Sheikh Hassan to go on and wait for us at Sarábit el Khádim with the bulk of the baggage, while we ourselves took only a dromedary and one camel lightly laden with provisions sufficient for four days.

Our route lay through Wády Gharandel, which we followed up to its head; this we found to be a broad open space, broken up with sand-hills, and covered with the tracks of numberless gazelles, ibexes and other animals. At one part of the road were traces of a recent fire, mixed with the ashes of which we noticed the charred bones of a camel. Some Arabs whom we found near the place declared that, a short time before, a camel had been attacked and killed by a pack of wolves, and that the owners of the beast, arriving at that moment, made the best of their loss by cooking and eating it upon the spot.

Old Sálem was delighted at the opportunity of once more finding an attentive listener to his wonderful store of legends, and our nightly conversations over the camp-fire were resumed. In six months, however, I had pretty well exhausted him on the subject of our Lord Moses and the Beni Israel, and we entered this time upon a course of secular anecdotes. Amongst others I was struck with a Bedawí version of Shylock which he recounted to me, the main facts of the story agreeing in every particular with those of the well-known European version, except that the Portia in this case was the debtor's own wife, who appeared before the Cádhí in the guise of a Turkish soldier to plead her husband's cause, and, having nonsuited the Jew, proceeded to thrash him well with her own fair hand; after which the Cádhí obligingly passed him over to the executioner.

After a few hours, the valley narrows slightly and takes the name of Seil Wády Elseifeh; here we looked about for a convenient spot, and pitched our camp.

In the morning we continued our route-sketch. At the entrance to Wády Wutáh are some fine *nawámís,* and a zigzag path up the mountain side leads to a sort of cave or gallery which the Arabs still make use of as a shelter in rainy weather. Wády Wutáh at this part is narrow and winding; its bed is filled with boulders and the *débris* of former *seils,* which have evidently swept through it at different times with considerable force. We stayed to rest about midday beneath a cliff, in which is a curious natural cave and some inscriptions, consisting chiefly of figures of animals; amongst them we noticed a quaint procession, in which the figures bore a strong resemblance to the ibis of Egyptian hieroglyphics. At a little distance from this, we passed the tents of Silmán, the 'Agyd or military general of the 'Aleygát tribe, who politely asked us in to drink coffee with him, but we were too much pressed for time to accept the invitation. The wády continues very rugged and winding, long spurs of the mountains jutting at short intervals into its bed.

At one point, rocks, about fifteen feet high, meet in the wády-bed, leaving only a path not more than a yard and a half wide between them. About an hour from camp we came upon a little spring on the right-hand bank, issuing from a narrow ledge of rock, and having a few stunted palm-trees by its side. A little farther on, the wády widens, and a circular space has been washed out by the *seil* or flood; shortly after this, the path goes through a fine pass, about twenty feet wide, between jagged sandstone rocks. At four o'clock we encamped at the head of Wády Wutáh, the continuation of which winds round into the mountains again, being there called Wády Umm Dúd. Close by our resting-place were

WADY WUTAH.

the tents of Khamís, the sheikh of the Ezmeileh Arabs, a branch of the ‘Aleygát tribe, who came down to meet us in the valley, and brought us a small sheep for a present. The sheikh himself acted as butcher; the kidneys, heart, and liver made an excellent dish; we had neither bacon nor onions to fry with it, but old Sálem supplied the deficiency by cooking it with salt water in lieu of fat. In accordance with the rules of Arab hospitality, the sheikh next morning accompanied us the greater part of a day's journey, and guided us up a magnificent ravine, with tall frowning sandstone cliffs on either hand, and called Telát Umm Rútheh. About an hour took us to the top of the pass, the camels coming by a somewhat easier way a little lower down. The view from this point was grand and instructive also, for we found that the mountains through which we had been passing, instead of forming a separate group with the unbroken ridge of the Tíh rising behind them, as they have hitherto been represented on the maps, are really an integral part of the Tíh plateau which at this point descends by a series of broken steps into the Sinaitic Peninsula, and extends down to the sea at Hammám Far‘ún. The pass leading into the plain, or rather valley, Rás Hamr, is a very steep and difficult one.

A long and tiring march brought us to Sarábít el Khádim some time after nightfall. Having enjoyed a sound night's sleep, we sent the men on to camp in Wády Khamíleh, and went ourselves up the mountain, where we spent the morning in examining the ruins and scraping about for curiosities. The next day, being Christmas Day, we determined to remain in camp, and occupied ourselves in posting up our journals and sketching. In the course of the day we caught and bottled a large specimen of the cerastes or horned snake, a very poisonous species which abounds in the desert. Taking advantage of this incident, we determined to amuse the Arabs and ourselves by giving them an entertainment of magic; so after dinner we displayed the box containing the jar of spirit in which we had preserved the reptile, and opening it with great mystery and pomp produced an excellent toy imitation of a serpent which we had purchased at Cremer's, and allowed it to curl and writhe in the light of a magnesium torch, to the huge delight of the Arabs, who did not for a moment suspect any deception. So convinced were they of the reality of the exhibition that not one amongst them could be found hardy enough to carry the locked box back again into the tent. Even old Sálem, with all his education, was completely taken in, and, attributing Drake's power of handling snakes to his having travelled in Morocco and become versed in all the learning of the Maghrabís, seated himself in the tent, and with an air of great mystery and intense excitement began to propose an ingenious scheme of his own. This was that we should abandon the foolish plan of visiting the Tíh, and should remain in the Peninsula, employing our magical arts for the purpose of bringing to light the hoards of treasure there concealed, Sálem himself undertaking to guide us to all the likely spots, and to assist us in our incantations. Tempting as the offer was, we were compelled to decline, and accordingly fell greatly in Sálem's estimation, as wrong-headed, fatuous persons. This piece of trifling gained us an immense reputation in the desert, and as we passed from tribe to tribe the story was repeated with various additions, until, some time after, we heard our Sheikh declaring to a knot of 'Azázimeh Arabs, who had visited our camp, that Khawájah 'Alí (Drake) was in the constant habit of watching serpents' holes, and that, having enticed the inmate out of his concealment, he made a practice of placing it in his bosom, and occasionally producing it for the pleasure of allowing it to bite his face. After a chat over the camp-fire with the Arabs we went to bed, having spent a very pleasant Christmas Day.

Passing through Seil Barg and Wády Lebweh, we next came to Erweis el Arneb, just below Jebel Zibb el Baheir, where we encamped. We ascended the last-named mountain in order to enjoy the magnificent prospect from the summit, and then, entering Wády Berráh, turned down the wády to the left, towards the springs at Erthámeh, which are situated in a very pretty and romantic glen. Another long day's march brought us to the Tarfah grove in Wády es Sheikh, an easy distance from the convent of St Katharine. Arrived there, we were greeted with demonstrations of joy by our old friends the monks, who consumed a quantity of *árakí* in our honour that was perfectly appalling to behold.

Having stayed long enough to examine the library and complete our final arrangements for the journey to Nakhl, we left the neighbourhood of Jebel Músa by Wády es Sheikh, and turning off at the little spring of Abu Suweirah, by the tomb of Nebí Sáleh in that valley, we struck into Wády Sáal and proceeded by our former route to 'Ain Hudherah.

On the way we examined again the curious remains at Erweis el Ebeirig, and still found every reason for adhering to our first impression that they are really relics of the Israelitish camp of Kibroth Hattaavah.

A little distance farther on, we came to some well-built *nawámís*, situated on a sand-bank, at the base of which was a rude wall. There were a number of flint arrow-heads lying about the spot, and I should conclude that it was one of the ancient hill forts so common in the country. About half-past three or four o'clock we reached the solitary rock called Hudheibat Hejjáj, where we found the tent pitched; but, as we had told Sheikh Hassan to encamp near the Shagíf, or cleft itself, we made him pack up again and proceed to the appointed place. We then went up to the cleft, and were as much struck as before with the beauty of the prospect, although the light was not then quite good enough to bring out in all their perfection the lovely tints of the rocks and mountains. On the hill to the right hand of the cleft is an oval erection of stones, evidently used as a beacon in former times, and apparently one of those posts which gave the present name Matáli Hudherah, "The look-outs of Hazeroth," to the spot. There are many Greek and Sinaitic inscriptions on the neighbouring rocks, which I imagine were written by the soldiers and sentries posted there, as one or two have the word στρατιώτης after their names. The old walls, the well-made aqueduct, the religious inscriptions, and the legend of the Báb er Rúm, or "Greek Gate," all point to the fact that there was once a monkish colony at 'Ain Hudherah.

Our next object was to determine the connection, if any, between 'Ain Hudherah and 'Ain el 'Elyá. We found that a communication does exist between them, although the road is impassable for camels; but, as there was also another road besides the one already known, we determined to follow it and approach Jebel el 'Ejmeh (the point at which we intended to enter the Tíh) from that direction. The camels had been sent round to Seil Hudherah, and as we came down by the Shagíf we saved some four or five hours, which time we spent in sketching by the palm grove. At about half-past three o'clock we started, began our route sketch, and camped immediately above the place in Wády Ghazáleh where the camel-track comes in, at the meeting of several wádies. The country after this point exhibits a rather different formation from the sandstone mountains and sandy plains through which we had been passing for the last day and a half; the valleys are very distinctly marked, and the rocks at the side consist of greenstone, with an overlying stratum of sandstone, which has been denuded off in all save the higher ridges and peaks. The sides of Wády el Hudherah itself consist of detached rocks and mountains, which give it the appearance of being broken into numerous side wádies.

The next morning, on leaving 'Ain Hudherah, we kept a north-easterly course, and crossing the watershed of a fine broad wády called Elt'hí, with a steep rise of more than 1000 feet, struck the great valley, Wády el 'Ain, at the foot of a lofty picturesque mountain called Jebel 'Arádeh. The route here bends round to the south-west following up Wády el 'Ain. The name 'Arádeh is etymologically the same as Haradeh, one of the unidentified

JEBEL 'ARADEH.

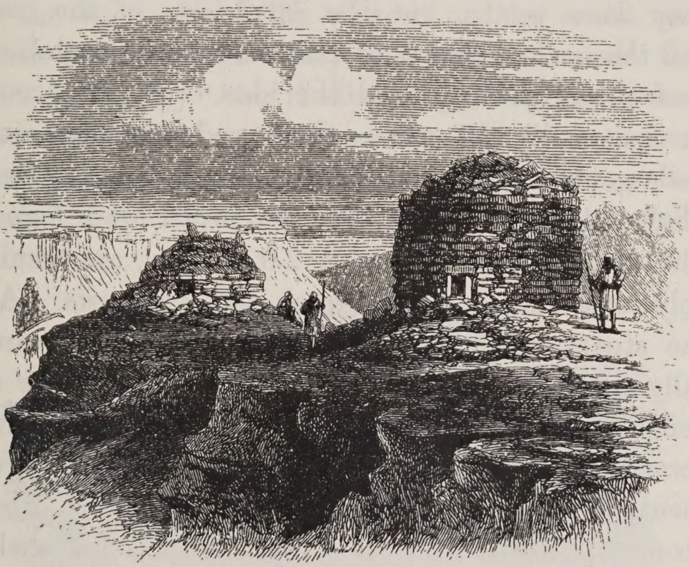
stations of the Israelites (Num. xxxiii. 24). Here we met for the first time with the Haiwátt Arabs. They are, if anything, poorer than the Sinai Bedawín, and wanting in the intelligence and cheerful contentment which distinguish the latter race. Indeed, with some rare exceptions, the various tribes which we encountered after this were in a descending scale of ignorance and superstition, and their one prevailing idea was that we had come for no other purpose than to stop their rain-supply. One old woman roundly abused us for the late drought, and, pointing to her half-starved goats, asked us if we weren't ashamed of ourselves? They believe that the weather office is entirely under the control of the Christians. Another instance of their mental degradation was their refusal to sell us a lamb for eighteenpence, which munificent sum we offered them; they demanded two shillings, and, after a long discussion, we were obliged to part without coming to terms.

This and other loitering upon the road made us so late that we had to do the last mile or so of this day's route sketch in the dark, lighting matches to read the angles by. Just before we reached camp, a Terbání Arab, whom we had met at the early part of the day, overtook us, accompanied by his father, and bringing a *bedan* for sale. These two insisted upon their prerogative, as the rightful owners of the soil, to conduct us, instead of the Emzeineh Arab whom we had brought with us as guide; and the latter had to go back, the hunter coming with us on the same terms.

We offered five francs for the *bedan*, which was accepted with wonderful cheerfulness, and we found from Sálem, later on, that the Arabs were not disposed to offend us, or to dispute anything we might say, lest, in spite of our protestations that we were unable to do so, we might stop the rain after all. The Haiwátt and Terabín have a breed of dogs called Selúkí, which they train to hunt the ibex and gazelle. One of these animals was prowling about the camp, and its economical master had tied a string tightly round its stomach, so that it should not eat too much.

Next day we continued our journey up Wády el 'Ain. The valley just above our camp became very winding, and continued so until we reached a broad open place called the 'Agúleh, where there were some palms and water. After this, it goes on in a straight line for an hour, then winds again for a little distance, and ultimately, a very narrow, winding gorge, with grand precipitous sides, leads to the head of the valley at 'Ain el 'Elyá, or "the upper spring." Here is a stream of running water, with a few palm-trees, and the valley opens out into a large plain covered with hills and vegetation (palms and tamarisk trees), on which we encamped.

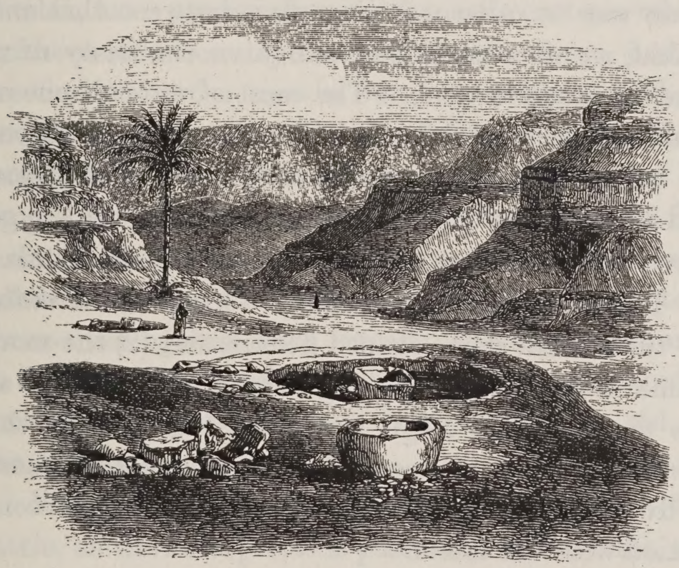
Shortly after passing 'Ain el 'Elyá, we came to a group of *nawámís*, those quaint beehive huts of which I have before spoken. They stood on the hills to the left of the wády, and were more perfectly preserved than any which we had hitherto seen in the Peninsula. They consisted of two detached houses, on separate hills, and a group of five on the side of a higher eminence. The first two had been used as



Primeval dwellings in Wády Biyár.

Arab burial-places; but of the second group at least three out of the five were apparently untouched. Their dimensions averaged 7ft. high by 8ft. in diameter, but one was fully 10ft. high and 8ft. in diameter inside. They were circular, with an oval top, the construction being precisely the same as that of the *nawámís* in Wády Hebrán, but the perfect condition in which they have been preserved exhibits in a much more striking degree the neatness and art of their builders. In the centre of each was a cist, and beside that a smaller hole, both roughly lined with stones; these were covered with slabs of stone, over which earth had accumulated. Some human bones which we found in the cists at first led us to the conclusion that they were tombs, but the small size of the cist, and the evident fact that they had never contained perfect skeletons, proved the idea to be erroneous. In the smaller cist, the earth showed signs of having undergone the action of fire, and, in one or two, small pieces of charred bone and wood were found. The doors, which are about 2 ft. square, are admirably constructed, with lintel and doorposts. All the stones used in the construction are so carefully selected as almost to give the appearance of being hewn, and those in some of the doors have certainly been worked, if not with any instrument, at least by being rubbed smooth with other stones. A flint arrow-head and some small shells were found in one of the *nawámís.* They are evidently dwelling-houses; but I must leave to those who are better versed than I am in the science of prehistoric man the task of determining to what race they once belonged; the remains are certainly some of the most interesting which I have met with in the East. The country all around is covered with them, every hill-side having some remains of *nawámís* upon it; but, owing to their exposed position, they have none of them been preserved in so perfect a state as those just described. Close by the *nawámís* were some stone circles. There would seem to have been a large settlement of these people in the neighbourhood of ‘Ain el ‘Elyá. The word *námús* is not known beyond Sinai, the Arabs in other parts of the desert calling them merely *gusúr*, or castles.

From the base of Jebel el 'Ejmeh (the name given to the edge of the Tíh plateau on the south and south-east) a broad valley runs down towards the sandy plains by 'Ain Hudherah, turning northward however to Wády el 'Ain at the Migráh or depression just spoken of. It is called El Biyár, "the wells," from three or four deep but dirty wells which exist there, the first we had met with of the pattern so common throughout Palestine. In these, several large stone troughs are provided for the purpose of watering the flocks and herds, and the mouth of the wells itself is stopped up with a large stone, to



EL BIYÁR.

be rolled away when occasion requires, precisely in the manner described in Genesis (xxix. 10), "and it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock."

In addition to the ammonia with which the goats of centuries had impregnated the water of El Biyár it contained a strong solution of Epsom salts, but, as there was no other watering place between that and Nakhl, we were compelled to live on the nasty mixture for nearly a week. The want of water is one of the most serious drawbacks to desert exploration; we ourselves suffered considerably from it at times, and I have on several occasions been compelled to go three weeks without so much as washing my hands.

I have already mentioned two kinds of *nawámís*, (1) the ancient dome-shaped houses, and (2) the more primeval tombs, viz. the huge stone circles found at the mouth of the Nagb Hawa and elsewhere in the Peninsula. Here we met for the first time with traces of dwellings corresponding with and existing in connexion with the latter.

At the head of Wády el Biyár were several immense groups of them, scattered all over the rough open plain which lies at the foot of Jebel el 'Ejmeh. The arrangement consisted of a series of very large circles, communicating for the most part one with another, and divided into separate apartments for living, sleeping, cooking and the like, a large space being left in the middle of each. The walls were in no case more than three feet high, and were composed of large boulders of stone carefully packed together; the insufficient height of these walls for protection against wild beasts or foes, and the absence of any analogous arrangement amongst the Arabs of the present day, would have puzzled us, had not Mr Drake's experience in Morocco supplied us with a clue to the solution of the difficulty. The Maghrabín or African Arabs, being originally emigrants from Arabia, have preserved many domestic customs which in the mother country have fallen into disuse, just as we find to be the case in our own colonies. These people dwell in tents, like the Bedawín of the East, but, unlike the latter, they are not surrounded by people of their own race, and are exposed to more frequent attacks from the Reefians and other barbarous tribes inhabiting the Atlas mountains. To protect themselves against such inroads, they have recourse to a method of fortification which the remains under consideration prove to have been at least as old as the Amalekites.

When a camping-ground has been selected, the cattle, as the most precious possession of the tribe, are collected together in one place, and the huts or tents are pitched in a circle round them; the whole is then fenced in with a low wall of stones, in which are inserted thick bundles of thorny acacia, the tangled branches and long needle-like spikes forming a perfectly impenetrable hedge around the encampment. These are called *Dowárs*, and there can be but little doubt that they are the same with the *Hazeroth*, or "field enclosures," used by the pastoral tribes mentioned in the Bible. I do not know whether these Amalekites of Jebel el 'Ejmeh had any water other than that of which we drank; if not, the total disappearance of the race is not so remarkable after all.

At last we fairly entered the Tíh, ascending Jebel el 'Ejmeh by a previously unknown but not difficult pass, named, from the proximity of El Biyár, Nagb el Mírád, or "the Pass of the watering-place." The first glimpse of the scene of our future wanderings was anything but cheerful or prepossessing; as far as the dead level of the country would allow the eye to reach, there was nothing to be seen but round featureless hills, each exactly like its neighbour, and divided by small winding wádies. The peculiar regularity of the limestone strata of which they are composed gives them the appearance of being covered with narrow well-made paths. The beds of the valleys are filled with dark-coloured herbage, amongst which the most noticeable is a fleshy-leaved plant called *gataf*, of a pleasant acrid taste, and used for food by the Arabs. A more utterly monotonous and uninviting piece of scenery I have never witnessed before or since. But the view of the Sinaitic Peninsula to the south presented a remarkable contrast to this; and, selecting the highest point of the ridge of Jebel el 'Ejmeh, we proceeded to take a farewell glance over the country where we had spent so many pleasant months, and to make observations for a more correct delineation of the outline of the edge of the Tíh plateau, which now was stretched out like a map before our eyes.

The view to the south is very fine, showing an immense expanse of low sandstone mountains, intersected by winding valleys, and forming a large plateau on a lower level between this and the Sinai mountains. The horizon is skirted by the different groups of Jebel Feiráni, Jebel Umm 'Alawí, Jebels Katarína, Tarbúsh, and Serbál, and the long ridge of Jebel el 'Ejmeh itself extending to our right and left*. On the plains, or rather hill-tops, and small plateau beneath, we noticed many remains of *nawámis*, dwellings and cemeteries. Jebel Katarína and the mountains of 'Akabah were covered with snow.

Jebel el 'Ejmeh has been proposed as a possible site for the scene of the Revelation of the Law, instead of Jebel Músa; but I do not consider either the mountain or the plain to be in the least adapted for the events of the Bible narrative. The mountain is not an isolated block, but a long ridge, or rather cliff, forming the edge of the Tíh plateau, while the plain is an irregular rolling surface, and ill-suited for the encampment of a large body of men.

Hence we proceeded for nearly a whole day's journey amidst the same monotonous scenery, when presently the valley began to widen out, and ultimately almost to disappear in the large open plain, long low ridges of limestone taking the place of the rounded hills through which we had hitherto passed. The soil here is composed of white gravel covered with coarse black flints, and the prospect, though extensive, was scarcely less melancholy than before.

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* The readings of the instruments on the summit of Jebel el 'Ejmeh were as follows: aneroid, 25·68 (mean); hypsometer, 204°·10, Faht.; thermometer, 51°, Faht.

Looming in the distance we could see a line of white hills exactly resembling a row of tents (and from that circumstance called El Kheimatein), and behind these stretched the shadowy outline of Jebel Yeleg. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of El Kheimatein we knew that Nakhl must lie, but, as our own Towarah Arabs knew nothing of the way, and a Tarbáni guide whom we had picked up before crossing Jebel el 'Ejmeh confessed himself utterly at fault, we seemed in a fair way of emulating the Israelites, and wandering in the wilderness for an indefinite period. Added to this slight inconvenience, our Arabs, who had been on the shortest of commons for some days, were getting impatient for food; and the camels, which were without fodder of any kind, could not carry their loads with their wonted alacrity and good temper.

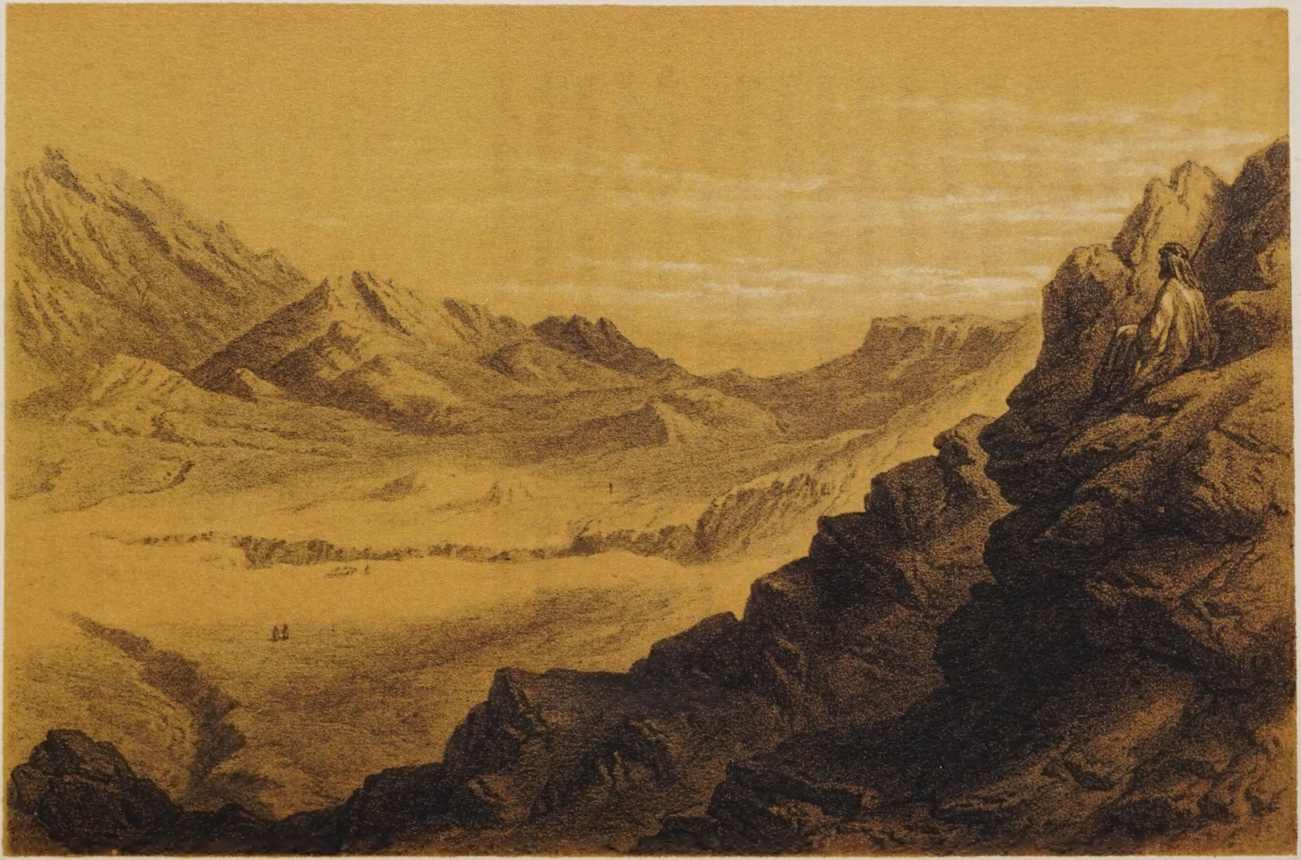
At this juncture, we fortunately fell in with our first specimen of the Teyáhah Bedawín.

He was a fine sturdy personage, well and even elaborately dressed, and there was an air of comfortable respectability about his camel, wife, children, and the other members of his family circle who accompanied him, which contrasted in a striking manner with the jejune appearance of our own caravan.

Soon after making his acquaintance, I asked him the name of the valley whose course we were following; his reply was prompt and plausible, but, remembering the Arab proverb, *el kizb milh el insán,* "Lying is the salt of a man," I proceeded to abuse him liberally for untruthfulness, and said that I would inquire of some *Arabs,* when I met any, for I knew that I could rely upon *their* word. The insinuation that *he* was but a felláh had the desired effect; our friend confessed to having prevaricated, and frankly owned that he considered our presence and the recent drought as suspiciously coincident, expressing also his decided opinion that such dangerous curiosity as ours ought not to be encouraged. On this, I assumed an air of great frankness, and explained the objects of our expedition and our system of procedure in so lucid a manner that his Semitic brain began to wander, and at the conclusion of my harangue he was impressed with an undefined but firm belief that the future prosperity of the country, and his own spiritual and temporal welfare, depended absolutely and entirely upon his affording us assistance and accurate information. The reader may ask how, with such a people to deal with, could we rely upon the truth of anything they might tell us? The reason is simple enough; an Arab is a bad actor, and with but a very little practice you may infallibly detect him in a lie; when directly accused of it, he is astonished at your, to him, incomprehensible sagacity, and at once gives up the game. By keeping this fact constantly in view, and at the same time endeavouring to win their confidence and respect, I have every reason to believe that the Teyáhah Bedawín gave us throughout a correct account of their country and its nomenclature.

When once an Arab has ceased to regard you with suspicion, you may surprise a piece of information out of him at any moment; and if you repeat it to him a short time afterwards, he forgets in nine cases out of ten that he has himself been your authority, and should the information be incorrect will flatly contradict you and set you right, while if it be authentic he is puzzled at your possessing a knowledge of the facts, and deems it useless to withhold from you anything further.

Our friend proved to be the nephew of the sheikh of the Teyáhah. He was encamped near some water, which, as rain had recently fallen, was plentiful in the valley, and desired us to stay there too; but, as we preferred pushing on, he packed up his goods and chattels, and came with us to Nakhl.



C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake del^{t}

M & N. Hanhart imp

WADY MÁYÍN WITH DISTANT VIEW OF THE TÍH.

CHAPTER III.

BÁDIET ET TÍH.

Arrival at Nakhl; reception by the Governor; bargaining with the Teyáhah; signing the contract. We start for the scene of our explorations. Our escort. Wády el 'Aggáb; more stone remains. Wády el 'Arísh. Wády Fahdí. Arab battle-field. A Bedawí ballad. Contellet Garaiyeh; remains of an ancient fort. Ascent of Jebel 'Araif. Wády Ma'ín. Wády Lussán; ancient road and remains; Lussán identical with the Roman station of Lysa.

We arrived at Nakhl, accompanied by the Teyáhah family and some goats, perhaps as disreputable a caravan as ever entered the place. Nakhl is a wretched square fort in the midst of a glaring desert plain, the picture being backed up with some rather pretty limestone mountains. Here a few miserable soldiers are maintained by the Egyptian Government, for the protection of the caravan of Pilgrims which annually passes by that road on the way to Mecca. We were received by the captain of the guard, a dark noseless Arab, and presently the Effendi himself, the Názir, or governor of the station, joined us, and we drank coffee with him and smoked pipes on the great divan at the end of the hall. None of the soldiers were in uniform, and they were as scoundrelly a set as one could well conceive.

When we had pitched our tent and prepared our dinner, the Effendi sent us word that he would not be responsible for our safety unless we allowed him to send down a guard of at least ten men to watch our tent at night. This number, after some wrangling with the military authorities, we reduced to four, with the understanding that the question of remuneration should be left to ourselves, and be contingent upon their good behaviour.

It was soon clear that all hope of peace or quietness was at an end for us, so long as we remained at Nakhl, and we accordingly resigned ourselves to our fate. The denizens of the fort, and of a little mud village attached to it, have absolutely nothing to do but to quarrel with each other, and the advent of a stranger is hailed with joy as a relief to the monotony of this pursuit. There was not a living creature amongst them, from the Military Governor to the mangiest Arab cur, but sat himself down by our tent for the greater part of the day, intent on begging, borrowing, or stealing something. Before we had been long encamped, Mislih, Sheikh of all the Teyáhah Bedawín, and his brother Suleimán, who had scented the prey from afar, pounced down upon us and obligingly honoured us with their company until long past midnight. The conversation was not inspiriting, and it seemed at first as if our exploration was likely to come to an untimely end; every part of the country which we expressed a wish to visit was in the hands of some hostile tribe ; whichever way we might go, we must infallibly be robbed and murdered ; and the most they could do for us would be to take us straight through to Palestine. Even in the latter case justice demanded that, as we had brought our things thus far upon four camels, we should hire from them, the Teyáhah, at least ten or twelve to carry the same weight.

At last, however, the difficulties vanished one by one, and the sheikhs went so far as to promise that they would take us somewhere, a concession for which (they declared) no pecuniary expression of gratitude on our part could possibly repay them; so, having arrived at this very satisfactory conclusion, we undressed and went to bed, as a delicate hint to our guests to retire.

The late hour, the insufferable heat of our tent, and the excitement of the conversation, had made us but little inclined for sleep, and the noisy altercation of the scoundrels outside who represented the Egyptian army rendered it absolutely impossible. Still we were left to ourselves for a few hours, and felt heartily grateful to Providence for that.

In the morning, long before we had finished breakfast, the Bedawín returned to the attack, and the important question of terms was raised. The Teyáhah demanded an exorbitant sum, and we as obstinately refused to give more *per* camel than we had previously paid the Towarah. After four mortal hours of wrangling, on finding them still determined, we consented to make some advance, and Drake and I proceeded to discuss the subject, while the Arabs sat silently awaiting the result of our deliberation. At first we made an elaborate calculation on paper, then improvised an apparently angry discussion, making use of the Arabic language for the benefit of our audience, and concluded with an offer of two piastres (nearly threepence) more *per* camel. The proceeding was so eminently orthodox and natural in the Bedawín's eyes that they were quite taken in by it, and to our utter astonishment accepted our terms.

The whole party now adjourned to the fort, that the contract might be written and sealed in the presence of the authorities. Here again was a curious scene, and one which, from its quaint and thoroughly Oriental aspect, I shall not easily forget.

Drake and I were seated on the stone bench or divan at the end of that gloomy old gateway; on a stool at our right sat the sleepy and purblind governor; and his noseless lieutenant supported us on the left. Then ranged along the right hand wall were the various Bedawín chiefs interested in the proceedings. First, Mislih, the head of the tribe, an ill-looking surly ruffian in a scarlet tunic, his features rendered more hideous than their wont by a scowl of mingled cunning and distrust; then came his brother Suleimán, who was to accompany us in our wanderings, a tall thin man, with a handsome countenance and a restless, eagle eye; next, our late Towarah sheikh, Hassan, who, smarting under a recent wrong, (the garrison had impounded one of his camels that morning for a little debt) was venting his ill-humour in long-winded curses upon the Egyptian Army, perfectly regardless of the presence of so large a portion of that awful body. A motley throng of men and boys completed the circle, in the midst of which a slave boy filling perpetual chibouks, and a tailless bantam, strutted about with an air of conscious importance. I will give the conversation which ensued, almost *verbatim,* that the reader may form some idea of the mode in which the business of a Notary Public is conducted in Arabia Petræa.

THE GOVERNOR (to the scribe, who is sitting on the ground at his feet). "Write, 'In the name of God.'"

No one objecting to this, the Governor assumes the air of a man who has done a very sharp thing, and, taking the paper from the scribe, reads the initiatory formula over and over again with great gusto.

GOVERNOR. "Write that on the 12th day of this blessed month Showwál, a contract has been entered upon between the Khawáját Bámer and Dirrek on the one hand, and Mislih chief of the Sagáïrát Arabs on the other;" (this being admitted, he proceeds) "the said sheikh engaging to provide five camels —"

SHEIKH MISLIH. Hear him, how he would eat up the poor Bedawín!—*six* camels, by your father's head!"

Ourselves. "Allah set you right! five camels was the number agreed upon, and even that is a manifest injustice, for we want but four."

Sheikh Hassan (*parenthetically*). "The Egyptian army is an army of dirt."

Governor. "Write five camels. And write moreover five camels well equipped and strong."

Mislih. "Hear the tyrant and despoiler of the poor! The strength of a camel is Allah's affair."

Ourselves. "Write 'well equipped and strong;' and write that, should one fall sick, the sheikh shall supply a substitute."

Mislih. "Ah these pitiless oppressors! whence can I bring a substitute from the desert? I seek refuge in Allah from Satan the accursed!"

Hassan (*axiomatically*). "The Egyptian army is an army of curs."

Governor. "Write."

In this way the contract proceeds, every passage being warmly contested, and, if it must be confessed, a slight amount of sharp practice being exhibited on either side. Having once signed and sealed the contract, we had no hesitation in committing ourselves to their good faith; but poor old Sálem, our Sinai Arab attendant, was so much impressed by their violent conduct and gestures that he forthwith decamped to his own more peaceful mountains, and we had the additional trouble of cooking, washing, &c., thrown on our own hands. At last, all our arrangements were completed; we bade adieu to the Názir, divided ten francs amongst the detachment of soldiers who had guarded us during our stay—whereat they were discontented and sarcastic—and leaving Nakhl behind us were soon fairly launched upon the Tíh.

And now, a word or two as to the individuals of whom our escort was composed; first and foremost came Suleimán ibn ʼAmir, the brother of Sheikh Mislih; he was a slightly-built dark-complexioned Arab, with a handsome and even intellectual countenance, and a polish of manner that would have done credit to a courtier. Unlike the Towarah sheikhs, he asserted his authority as director-in-chief of the escort, and by a firm but quiet demeanour kept the men to their work with much less noise and altercation than we had hitherto been accustomed to. He was, in fact, a man of considerable talent and force of character, one of those stronger minds that involuntarily command respect. All this made him exceedingly hard to deal with, and, as he had a decided *penchant* for doing as he liked, and we were equally determined to have our way, it was sometimes difficult to avoid a dispute, while, had we really quarrelled, there would have been at once an end of all chance of visiting the unexplored parts of the country. Being moreover, as I have just hinted, a painfully polite man, he naturally tried on all occasions to cheat us in a gentlemanlike way, and we were obliged to parry his attempts at imposition as gracefully as they were made. But in the end civilised *finesse* triumphed;

we found that he was afflicted with asthma, and passionately fond of poetry, so Drake gave him medicine, while I read or recited to him choice pieces of Arab verse, and between us we moulded him to our will.

Just before my departure from England, a learned Syrian friend of mine, Hassoun Effendi, had put into my hands an Arabic metrical version of the book of Job, which he had himself recently composed, and Suleimán, having once had a taste of this, would implore me night after night to read him a portion, for the vivid pictures of the trials of that grand old Sheikh of Uz excited all his Bedawín sympathies, and the easy rhythm and choice language in which they were clothed captivated his ear. This book has since been printed at Beyrout, where it is already a favourite alike with Christians and Mohammedans, and even the most fanatical amongst the latter, who would shudder at the thought of reading the book of the Nazarenes, yield to the soft influence of song. Poor Suleimán begged me day after day to teach him to read. I am an advocate for the spread of education, and it was hard to refuse him; but one reflection made me obdurate—*I knew he would ask me to give him the book.*

Suleimán's factotum was a little wiry Bedawí, named Selím; at first he was inclined to be suspicious and uncommunicative, but in the end his native good humour prevailed, and we became the best of friends. A slight *faux pas* on his part was mainly instrumental in deciding in our favour the contest of wits between

Suleimán and ourselves. The incident, though insignificant in itself, is characteristic of our desert life. One day, as we were striking camp, and the Arabs were engaged in adjusting the camel-loads, I came up to their fire for the purpose of lighting my pipe. What was my amazement, on turning over the ashes, to find a potato—*our* potato—roasting there! Watching unobserved, I saw Selím quietly abstract the delicacy and wrap it in his *ábbah* for future surreptitious consumption, and immediately taxed him with the theft. Now the Bedawín proper, though professional robbers, have a wholesome aversion from pilfering, and, on Selím's being caught in the act, there was the greatest consternation in the camp. Suleimán's pious horror was a sight to see, and in spite of our intercession Selím was formally beaten before going to bed; ever after, when a difficulty arose, we ungenerously brought up this frightful instance of dishonesty, and the stolen potato gained us the victory.

The rest of the band consisted of Selím's cousin Suleimán, ("Abu Shusha‘," we called him, "the father of the topknot") who had lost most of his fingers in the last raid against the ‘Anazeh; Náser, in face and figure the counterpart of a little Ninevite Bull; and Sálem, a tame idiot, who attached himself to our service with great fidelity.

Rough and rude our guides certainly were, but, when once we had started with them, they proved as cheery and faithful companions as we could have wished, and in all collisions with Arabs, whether of their own or other tribes, they stood by us most manfully. Our names were at first a great stumbling-block to them, and, after several vain efforts to pronounce them, they substituted orthodox and intelligible Muslim titles for our barbarous appellations, and henceforward Drake became known as 'Ali, and I sank my own identity in that of 'Abdallah.

The first day's march is always a short one, and after a few hours' walking we encamped in Wády el 'Arísh, near a patch of ground cultivated by the Egyptian garrison of Nakhl. The tent was scarcely pitched when a sudden storm of sand arose, and this was immediately followed by a heavy shower of rain, which continued throughout the night and did not tend to improve our first impressions of the place. The next morning also broke with a cloudy, threatening sky, but we determined to start, and were in consequence soon drenched to the skin; we remained in that pleasant state all day, and in the evening pitched our tent, to all appearances, beneath a mighty shower-bath. We had reached Wády el 'Aggáb, and on a long low ridge near our camp was an immense number of ancient sepulchral circles and cairns; the effect of these against the horizon was very curious and solemn, standing there as they did, the only evidence of human handiwork in all that desolate expanse.

In the morning we went out to look at these *nawámís*, or, as the Arabs here call them, *mahattát* (*i.e.* camping-grounds). Suleimán came into the tent, and suggested that we might go by ourselves and do as we pleased, a great concession from such a tribe as the Teyáhah. When we came back, one of the men picked up our *fás* and crowbar, and said, in a very suspicious tone, "Look here, Suleimán, they've been digging!" "Well," said he curtly, "what if they have? What do you suppose they came here for?" The ruins are simply cairns, with only one stone circle amongst them; they extend for a great distance around, and number nearly a hundred. We dug into the stone circle, and found charcoal and burnt earth in what I have before alluded to as the sacrificial area, but nothing at all in the central cairn. We also opened one of the largest of the cairns, but, although we dug down the middle of it to the depth of five feet, and came to the solid rock, we could find no trace of a burial. The same thing had happened to us in Wády el Bíyár; we could never find any trace of the skeleton, as in those on the granite soil of Sinai, although there was always the burnt earth upon which some bereaved Amalekite had offered up a sacrifice for his departed friend. The custom still survives in the offering up of sacrifices at the tombs of *welís* (or sheikhs), *i.e.*, saints. I believe the only sacrifice permitted by the Mohammedan law is that at the Hajj, but the ceremonies there observed were retained, no doubt perforce, by Mohammed, who would have been unable to induce his people to give up rites so time-honoured as those appertaining to the Ka'abeh at Mecca. The size of the largest cairns was about twenty feet in diameter (the shape being circular) and the height about four feet. The whole collection is called El ‘Uggábeh.

In Wády el ‘Arísh, we came upon a *jorf*, that is, a steep bank formed by the torrent cutting through the soil of the wády-bed; eight feet below the surface were the remains of a charcoal fire, and the little hearth of stones, around which a knot of way-farers had sat down to prepare their evening meal. The fire and hearth was such an one as we ourselves made every day; but how many years must have elapsed before eight feet of *débris* could be spread over it, and again cut away by the stream, in that land where a flood is an event to date from for generations to come!

Once again we were marching slowly across the desert. If I were to give a detailed description of our walk over the glaring expanse, the narrative would, I am afraid, appear to the reader as monotonous as the reality did to us. Day by day we toiled over flat white gravel plains, and although the sight of a few scanty shrubs, or the slightest indication of life, were to us incidents worthy of noting down, I could hardly hope that such an entry as the following, which I find in my journal, would appear strikingly sensational: “Monday.—Walked six hours; saw two beetles and a crow.”

At about two miles from camp we came to a low pass called Rás Fahdí; a descent of a hundred feet from this brought us into a wády of the same name, which presently broadens out into a plain at the foot of the mountain plateau towards which we were bound. Conspicuous amongst the peaks of this plateau rose the cone of Jebel 'Araif, resembling, as its name implies, the crest or arched outline of a camel's hump. On our left was the fine isolated block of Jebel Ikhrimm, and far away to the right the cliffs sank gradually lower and lower until they lost themselves in the flat expanse of desert. In Wády Fahdí, we noticed several small heaps of stones, and a line drawn in the flint-covered sand, which years have not yet effaced. The cairns mark the graves of some Bedawín who fell in a bloody fight at this spot. The Bení Wásil, a branch of the Towarah Arabs, had long been at enmity with the Dhallám, a tribe inhabiting the district around Tell 'Arád on the borders of Palestine. The latter had carried off a herd of camels in a border raid, and the Beni Wásil had started in pursuit and caught up the marauders at this very spot, where a fierce encounter took place, many of the bravest falling on either side. For hours the battle raged with equal fortune; but when the shades of night came on, and stayed the carnage, the chiefs of the two tribes held a parley and agreed to a compromise. Half the camels were driven off by the Dhallám, and the Beni Wásil recovered the other moiety of the spoil; but before they parted they said, "God has drawn this line between us," and with their spears they made the mark upon the sand which we now beheld.

The great hero of the Towarah on this occasion was Zewáid; the Bedawín still sing a song commemorating the fight, of which the following is a translation:

Like Israel's hosts in days of yore
The trackless waste of Tíh we crossed;
Both men and beasts were grieving sore,
Both men and guides their way had lost.

Yet still our stolen herds we sought
And wandered on in fruitless quest;
With madd'ning sorrow all distraught,
We rent the robe and beat the breast.

But lo! another path we took,
And shouts of triumph rent the air;
The Wády, it was Du 'l Burúk*,
The robber and his spoil were there.

Zewáid rushed upon the foe
And chased them o'er the open plain;
Zewáid struck the foremost blow
And cleft the leader's head in twain.

A comrade to avenge him flew,
Zewáid made the foremost thrust,
And pierced his body through and through
And laid the hero in the dust.

And to Zewáid in the fight
The timid for protection went,
Like men who on a wintry night
Seek shelter in a friendly tent.

Wády el Fahdí falls into Wády Garaiyeh, a broad level valley, which stretches right up to the base of Jebel 'Araif, and drains the south-western portion of Jebel Magráh. Here, for the first time since leaving Nakhl, we turned off the beaten path, and then kept along the valley until we found some water which had been brought there by the late rains. In order to take advantage of this, we were obliged to encamp at some *retem* bushes, near which the supply ended. Feeding in the neighbourhood was a herd, consisting of more than 150 milch camels. We were bound for some ruins, called Contellet Garaiyeh, of which we had heard; the weather was frightfully hot, and as a sandstorm had been blowing with great violence for two days, it was not by any means a comfortable journey. On our way, we were overtaken by an old Arab named Músa, the proprietor of the ruins in question, who conceiving, like the rest of his compatriots, that the visit of strangers must in some way or other influence his crops, besought our sheikh Suleimán to camp short of the place and take us by it without stopping. We overheard Suleimán's reply to this modest request; it was that, if he did not make himself agreeable, we should write a potent charm and bury it in the very middle of his patch of ground; and that the effect of it would be to turn all future rainfalls off his estate, so that they should not moisten the soil, even when the surrounding country was drenched with generous showers. This threat so utterly disconcerted the poor old sheikh that he himself consented to act as our guide, and did all he could to gain our good will. Contellet Garaiyeh we found to be a white hill, with a slight depression on the summit surrounded by what at first appeared to be a natural parapet or rampart. On digging into the latter, however, we discovered that it was composed entirely of *débris* and concealed the foundations of an old wall composed of sun-dried bricks and containing beams of wood with signs of mortices, bolts, &c. The most curious feature about it was that at regular intervals we came upon fragments of large amphoræ or jars; these had been built into the wall in regular sets of four, carefully packed with straw and protected by a frame-work of wood. The place appeared to have been an ancient fort, and the jars were probably arranged to serve as reservoirs for water in lieu of cisterns. One jar which we extracted was marked upon the shoulder with a Phenician *aleph*, but this circumstance is not to be relied upon for fixing the date, as even at the present day the potters of Palestine and Syria make use of the most ancient signs for their trade-marks, having probably had them handed down from generation to generation. Yet the wood used in the frame-work seems to indicate a period when the country was better cultivated than it is at present, for there is not now a single tree to be found, save one small sidr-tree in the fort at Nakhl and an acacia in Wády Fahdí dedicated to the sheikh of that name.

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* The name of a Wády in the neighbourhood of Jebel Ikhrimm.

In the afternoon we went to look at some wells which exist in the neighbourhood, but which do not contain any water except when a great rain brings a flood down the valley and fills them. They are four or five in number, but only two are of any size or apparently very old. Husein, the sheikh of the Arabs who dwell in and near Wády Garaiyeh, asked me to tell him whether there was not a well containing fresh water somewhere in the vicinity. He said I ought to know, and that if I did not, I might find out from some of our books.

Our presence and unusual proceedings had now drawn a number of Arabs to the spot, and many inquiries were made as to our business and destination. On these points Suleimán did not care to enlighten them, as each one had a property in some particular spot which it was probable we might visit, and was ready to urge his claim to *ghafr* or toll. Now Suleimán very wisely conceived that the more others extorted from us, the less share of plunder would he himself get at the end; and, being a rascal of an inventive turn of mind, he improvised a little comedy to throw them off the scent: "I will not go to Petra," said he to us, "and if you don't like to go straight through to Palestine, I'll go back to Nakhl." We had not the least intention of going to Petra then; but, taking the cue from his spasmodic winks and hideous contortions of face, we entered into the conspiracy, and obstinately declared that we would go there or nowhere else. The other Arabs joined Suleimán in urging upon us the folly of such a course, as the Teyáhah were on bad terms with the Fellahín of Wády Músa; we however contrived to leave them quite mystified as to our future movements, while Suleimán, in the privacy of our tent, complimented himself on his own diplomacy, and called his compatriots "bulls and donkeys." As he whiffed a pipe of cavendish which we had given him in reward for his efforts in our cause, and which made him very ill, I could not help thinking what an admirable statesman he would have made.

We then started for Jebel 'Araif, but, owing to the scheming of Suleimán, who would take the farthest way round, we were obliged to camp short of it that day. The journey was over a level and perfectly uninteresting plain, a few stone circles and heaps being all that we could find. By two o'clock the next day we camped in Wády Máyín, at the foot of Jebel 'Araif. A little way from the mountain were some stone circles (tombs), and at the mouth of the wády the remains of what had been once a large collection of dwellings belonging to the same people. They are so destroyed, however, by the *seils* as to be scarcely distinguishable at a distance from ordinary collections of stones. A city they had undoubtedly once been, but a city that has "become a desolate heap."

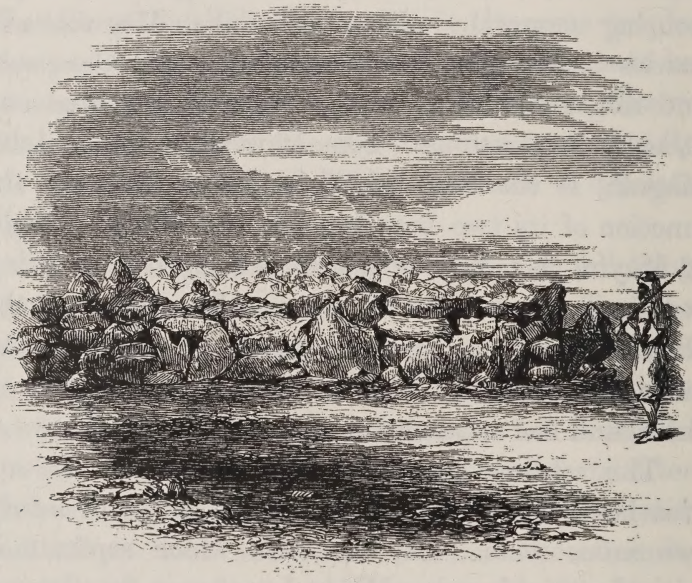
On preparing for an early start the following morning, we found some Arabs at the camp-fire, who declared that we should not go up the mountain. Knowing this to be all nonsense, we returned curt answers to their impudent remarks, and left Suleimán to settle with them while we had breakfast; after which we started off for the mountain, and by a stiff climb of an hour and a-half reached the summit. Our path at first lay along a steep ravine filled with vegetation, and then across a difficult shoulder of the mountain. Jebel 'Araif consists of a series of jagged peaks of hard limestone, the strata being very much distorted, and having the appearance of a great upheaval. There are no fossils whatever in the rock of which it is composed, nor indeed did we see such a thing in the whole country.

As this mountain rises far above all the surrounding heights, the character and features of the country can be well ascertained from its summit.

To the west is the broad and monotonous expanse of the Tíh desert, above which at intervals rise Jebels Ikhrimm, Helál and Yeleg. To the south-west lie some scattered hills, forming the head of Wády Garaiyeh, a valley which, sweeping round the foot of Jebel ʻAraif, receives the whole drainage of the neighbouring mountain plateau of Jebel Magráh, and carries it down to Wády el ʻArísh. On the peaks and ridges of the mountains are various cairns and other rude erections. Some few miles up in Jebel Magráh, is the head of Wady Máyín, and at the junction of its two branches are the Biyár or wells of Máyín, the water of which is described as being peculiarly good and "sweet as the waters of the Nile." There are no ruins of any kind near the wells, but a large and well beaten camel-track leads up to them, and has apparently existed there for ages.

This valley broadens considerably as it approaches Wády Garaiyeh, being at that point nearly two miles wide. On the hills which separate it from the neighbouring Wády Lussán we found some excellent specimens of the primeval *Dowárs*, or camping-grounds, already described as existing in such large numbers at the foot of Jebel el ʻEjmeh. Here, as elsewhere, they were situated on the *side* of the hill, while the sepulchral circles and cairns are invariably placed on the top or crest.

A little farther on, and higher up upon the intervening hills, is a main road leading direct to ‘Akabah by way of Wády Lussán, its course being traceable for a long distance by camel-tracks, and innumerable small heaps of stone placed there to mark the way. Further still are the Kharabát Lussán, a large collection of curious solid cairns, differing in construction from the others which we had seen, and built for some purpose which we could not quite divine.



KHARABAT LUSSÁN.

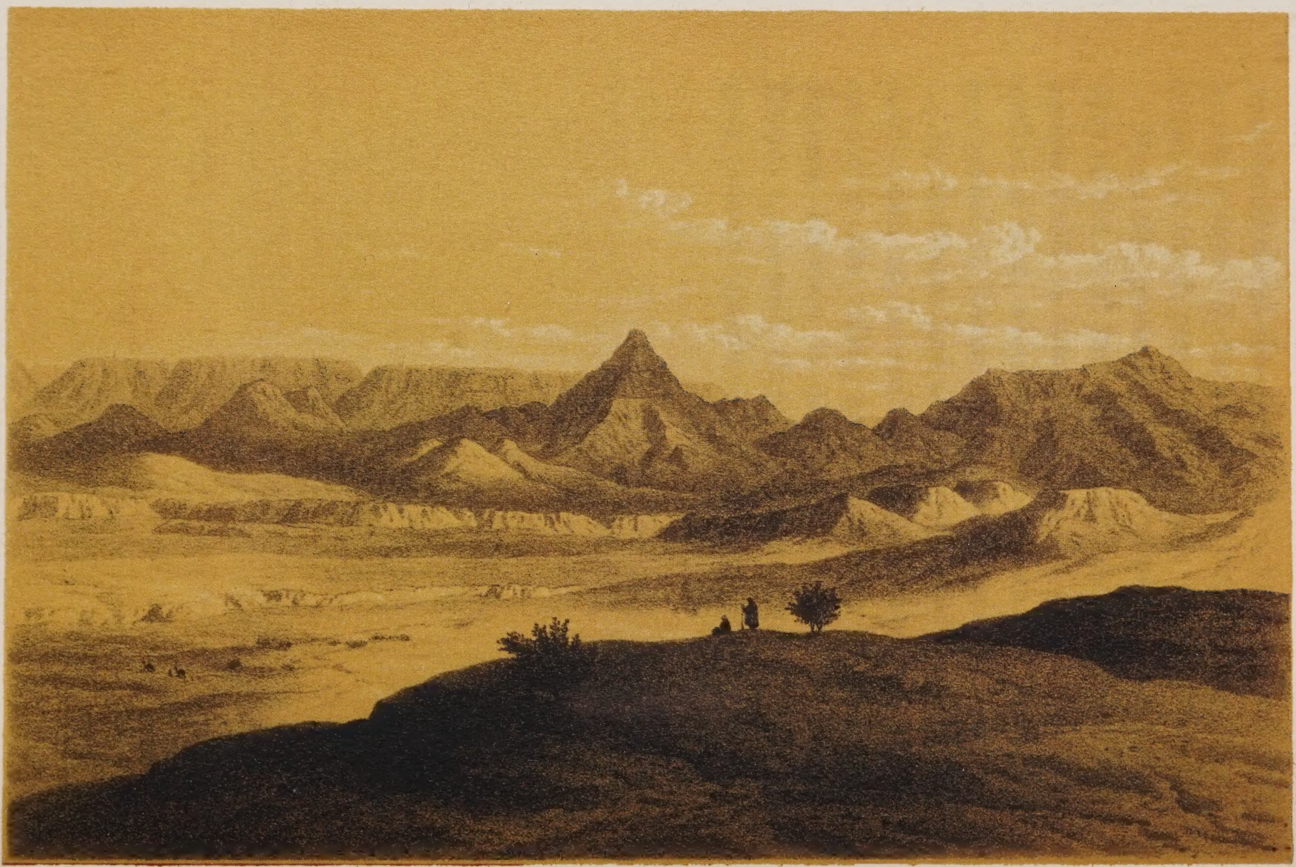
The Arabs tell a wonderful story of this spot: a man of the ‘Azázimeh tribe was one night crossing the hills when he espied a light amongst the ruins.

He at once made for them, and demanded, as he came near, whose encampment it might be. But no sooner had he uttered the words than the light disappeared, all save a small glimmer, which he found to proceed from a curiously cut stone lying upon the ground. This he carried away with him, and sold to a Christian at Jerusalem for ten pounds!

Descending into Wády Lussán itself, we found considerable signs of former cultivation; admirably constructed dams stretched across the valley, and on the higher slope were long low walls of very careful construction, consisting of two rows of stones beautifully arranged in a straight line, with smaller pebbles between. One of these was 180 yards long, then came a gap, and another wall of 240 yards, at the end of which it turned round in a sharp angle. The next was even larger, and here the object of the walls was at once apparent, as the enclosure was divided into large steps or terraces, to regulate the irrigation and distribute the water, the edge of each step being carefully built up with stones. They formed *Mezári‘*, or cultivated patches of ground, and from the art displayed in their arrangement belonged, evidently, to a later and more civilised people than those who now inhabit the country. On the hill-side, a few hundred yards away to the left, were other ruins: a dwelling-house, a cistern and a granary. The former was as well constructed as a modern house, and the disposition of the chambers, with a courtyard in the centre of the building, reminded me of a Pompeian villa. Various pieces of fluted pottery were found about the place. In a little ravine close by was a cave; it had no doubt served as a storehouse, for which purpose the Arabs use it now.

From the presence of these ruins, and the proximity of the road just described, I should infer that Lussán itself is identical with the ancient Roman station of Lysa, which is mentioned in the Peutinger as situated 48 Roman miles from Eboda or ʿAbdeh.

Dr Robinson had already suggested this identification; but, as he could not learn that any ruins existed in the valley, and was unable to make the distance between it and El ʿAujeh (his assumed Eboda) agree with that just referred to, he does not seem to have considered the evidence as conclusive.



C.F. Tyrwhitt Drake, delt M & N Hanhart imp

WILDERNESS OF KADESH.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WILDERNESS OF KADESH.

'Ain Gadís; reasons for its identification with Kadesh; its situation on the southern border of the Holy Land; ascent of the Spies. Site of Eshkol; Dr Robinson's Kadesh. Wády Muweilih. Christian Hermitages. Nature of Arab tribe-marks. Baal-worship. 'Ain Gaseimeh. Entrance into the Negeb or South Country.

IMMEDIATELY below the ruins, Wády Lussán begins to narrow, and presently debouches upon a large open plain, where it is met by Wády Jerúr and other smaller wádies, which take their rise in the plateau of Jebel Magráh. The view is a fine one, although the outlines assumed by the limestone are not very imposing, and the landscape lacks the beautiful colouring of the Sinai mountains. From the cliffs which bound the plain, runs down a valley called Wády Gadís, a spring of that name rising at its head, and the plain itself may be identified almost indisputably with the Wilderness of Kadesh. This is perhaps the most important site in the whole region, as it forms the key to the movements of the Children of Israel during their Forty Years' Wanderings.

The identification of 'Ain Gadís with Kadesh was first suggested by Dr Rowlands[*], but he applied the name wrongly to 'Ain el Gudeirát, some miles farther northward, and seems not to have visited this spot at all. The 'Ain Gadís[†] discovered by us consists of three springs, or rather shallow pools, called *themáil* by the Arabs, one of them overflowing in the rainy season, and producing a stream of water. It is situated in about Lat. 31° 34′ N., Long. 40° 31′ E., three miles beyond the watershed of the valley, at that part of the previously unexplored plateau of the 'Azázimeh Mountains, where this falls suddenly to a lower level, and, as we found on subsequently passing through it, is more open and more easily approached from the direction of 'Akabah. It is thus situated at what I should call one of the natural borders of the country; I will explain what I mean by the latter expression.

From Northern Syria to Sinai, southwards, the country seems to have certain natural divisions, marked by the comparative fertility of each. In Syria, at the present day, we have a well-watered and productive soil; in Palestine, after the Hermon district, the soil is much less fertile, but must certainly at some time, when better cultivated, have been more productive than it is at present; south of the mountains of Judæa, to the point immediately below which 'Ain Gadís is situated, the country, though now little more than a barren waste (from the failure of the water-supply, consequent upon neglect), presents signs of a most extensive cultivation, even at a comparatively modern period. This is, as I have already shown, the Negeb, or South Country of Palestine, and 'Ain Gadís may be considered as lying nearly at the frontier of this district. Between this and the edge of the Tíh plateau the country is even more barren, but there are still traces of a primeval race of inhabitants, in the cairns and *nawámís*, or stone huts, to which I have before adverted. At the time of the Exodus it must have borne a similar relation to the then fertile region of the Negeb which that now barren tract at the present day bears to Palestine. This would exactly answer to the description in the Bible, the Israelites waiting as it were on the threshold of the southern portion of the Promised Land; and from the analogous recession of fertility northwards we may fairly conclude that the surrounding country was then better supplied with water than it is now, and that it was therefore at least as suitable for the encampment of the Israelitish hosts as any spot in Sinai. This view is supported by the fact that we *still* find an abundant supply of water at Muweilih, a few miles to the north, and at Biyár Mâyín to the south.

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[*] Williams' *Holy City*, Vol. I. p. 464.

[†] This word is in meaning and etymology identical with the *Kadesh* of the Bible.

But the spies went up from Kadesh, and returned thither, bringing with them grapes from Eshkol; this latter site is generally assumed to be identical with Hebron, and, if the theory be correct, it may be objected that the distance is too great for grapes to have been brought, to say nothing of so very perishable a fruit as figs—which are also mentioned in the same passage: "And they came unto the brook of Eshkol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs." (Numbers xiii. 23.)

This argument, so far from militating against the probability of our 'Ain Gadís representing Kadesh, would seem to me rather to lead to the conclusion that Hebron, or more properly Wády el Khalíl, cannot be identified with Eshkol. Indeed, the principal reason for assuming it to be so appears to be the circumstance that Hebron is the most southern point of Palestine where grapes are found, and that the district is still renowned for them. But it is a noteworthy fact that among the most striking characteristics of the Negeb are miles of hill-sides and valleys covered with the small stone-heaps formed by sweeping together in regular swathes, the flints which strew the ground; along these grapes were trained, and they still retain the name of Teleilát el 'Anab, or "grape mounds." Towers similar to those which adorn the vineyards of Palestine are also of frequent occurrence throughout the country. I should therefore conclude that Eshkol lay much further south than Hebron; for Caleb and his companions, travelling with so much caution as they must have employed in their character of spies, would naturally have brought their bulky specimen from the point nearest the camp. If Eshkol be at Hebron, we must either suppose that they brought the grapes through a grape-bearing country, or that they brought them to a Kadesh north of ‘Ain Gadís and situate at the present border of Palestine; on the latter hypothesis the Israelites would have passed through, if they were not in actual possession of, this same district, therefore the cluster would not have been such a novelty to them as the words of the Sacred text imply that it really was.

Dr Robinson's theory that Kadesh must be sought for at ‘Ain el Weibeh, in the neighbourhood of the passes of Sufáh and Figreh, immediately below the southern border of Palestine, does not seem to me tenable, especially from strategic considerations; for the Children of Israel would have been confined, as it were, in a *cul-de-sac,* with the subjects of King Arad, the Amorites, the Edomites, and the Moabites, completely hemming them in, whereas in the neighbourhood of ‘Ain Gadís they would have had nothing but the wilderness around them, and certainly no very formidable hostile peoples in their rear. Nor do I think that a good general like Moses would have chosen a bad position for so important a camp; and I am therefore confirmed in my belief that the ‘Ain Gadís which we saw is actually the Kadesh of the Bible.

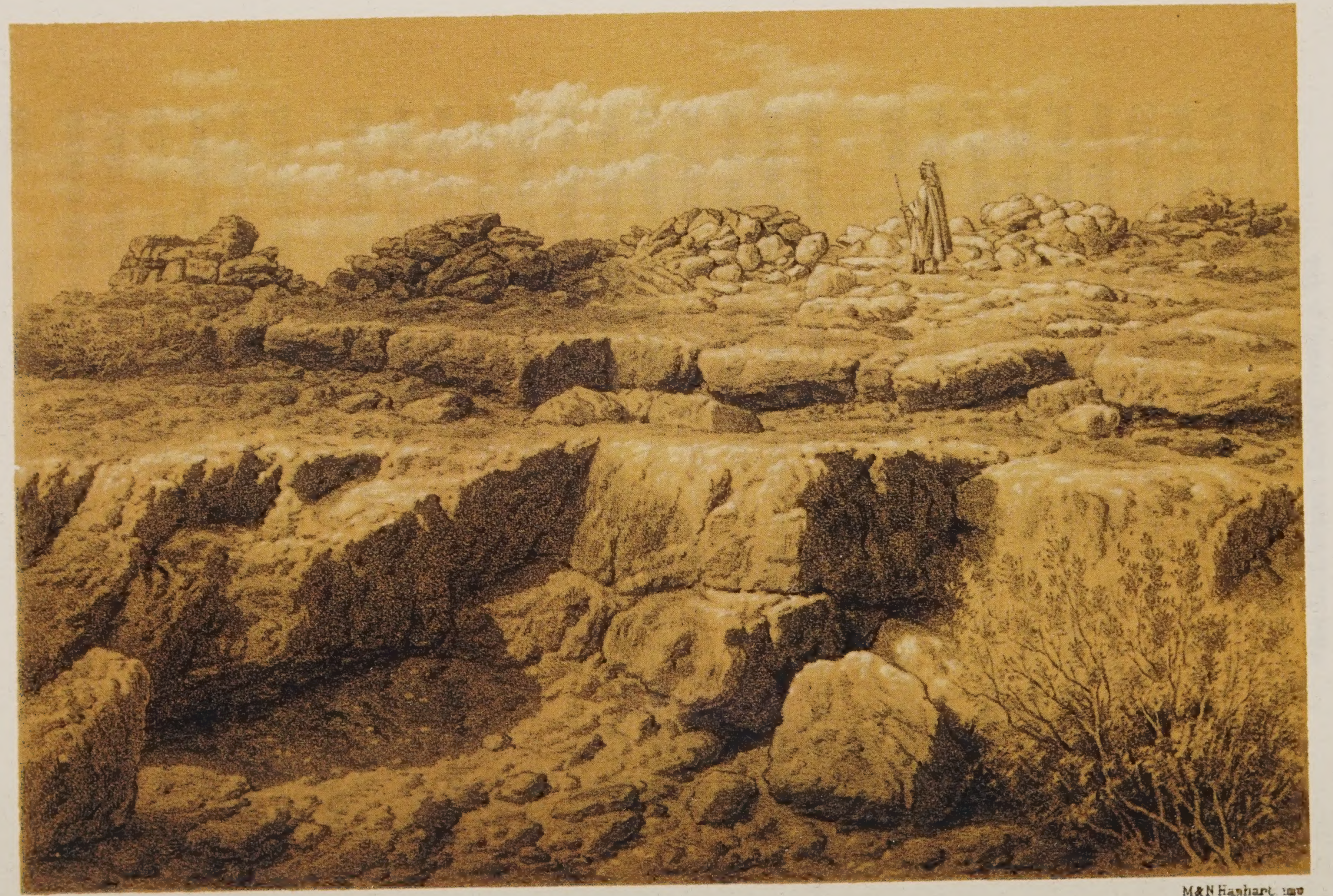
From the point where Wádies Lussán and Jerúr meet, and, passing through a small opening, debouch upon the plain, we crossed over into a wády called

Seisab, and there encamped. Turning out of the valley, we continued to cross the plain until we reached Wády el Muweilih, at the foot of the mountains of the same name, where there is a spring which has been suggested as probably identical with Hagar's Well, though the orthodox Mussulman tradition places the latter in the neighbourhood of Mecca.

Wády Muweilih presents a curious appearance, the original level of the valley-bed having been eaten away by the stream, except in little square isolated blocks, which at a distance resemble a collection of flat-roofed houses. There is a good supply of water, obtained principally from a number of wells similar in pattern to those noticed as existing near the Nagb el Mirád, and the immediate neighbourhood is comparatively fertile, producing many tamarisk and other trees.

Near the water is a small cave cut out of the rock, and, to judge from the remains of crosses and rude frescoes upon the wall, apparently at one time the residence of a Christian hermit. A little further on we found another cave of still more imposing shape and proportions; it was excavated higher up in the face of the cliff, and reached from a staircase cut in the rock and opening out at the bottom. There were two chambers, each of which contained a small altar-niche and exhibited traces of Christian fresco ornamentation.

These caves are also covered with the Arab tribe-marks which I have before described, each Bedawí



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CAIRNS AT MUWEILEH

visitor to the place delighting to set his sign-manual on the wall. M. de Saulcy (and, following him, many subsequent writers), who had noticed them in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, calls them "Planetary signs*," and in truth they are not altogether unlike the mysterious astrological emblems on the coloured bottles which adorn a chemist's window.

These tribe-marks consist in reality of distorted Himyaritic letters, generally the initial letter of the name; thus, the mark of the ʻAnazeh tribe is ⊙, a circle with a dot in the centre, the ancient Himyaritic letter, ʻAin, with which the word ʻAnazeh begins. The Arabs themselves, being ignorant of writing, are of course unaware of this fact; they consequently designate their tribe-mark by the name of the article it may chance to resemble, *ed dabbús*, "the club," *el báb*, "the door," and so on. These caves are now used by the Bedawín as store-houses for alkali, which they obtain from the ashes of certain plants and sell to the soap-makers at Gaza.

The hills around Muweilih are covered with relics of a primeval people—cairns and dwellings such as we have noticed elsewhere, and, strangest of all, innumerable well-made heaps of stone, placed with extreme regularity along the edges of the cliffs and always facing the East. They are too small for tombs, and too far apart ever to have formed a wall; what then could they be? I am inclined to the idea that they are in some way or other connected with the worship of Baal; the altars of the Sun-God were, like these, on "high places," and would naturally be turned, like these, towards the East.

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* See Dr Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 310.

From the extent of the remains, and the existence of water in such large quantities upon the spot, I should infer that in early times this was the site of a large and populous city, one of those "cities of the south," it may be, which the Israelites destroyed. The hill-sides are traversed in every direction by well-constructed paths, and traces are also visible in the valley of dams and other devices for irrigation, all of which bespeak a former state of fertility and industry. While at Muweilih we were astonished at receiving a visit from Selámeh, one of our old Towarah guides. He had come with his father from Gaza, whither he had accompanied a party of travellers, and, having spent the whole of his camel-hire in purchasing a suit of clothes, presented a very magnificent and bran new appearance.

Leaving Muweilih we proceeded up Wády Gaseimeh for about an hour and a-half, and then encamped amidst a scorching, blinding sandstorm. On the hill at the foot of which our tent was pitched was a ruin—a sort of rude dwelling-house, but more carefully built than the ordinary enclosure, as the foundation walls were formed of two rows of stones, with rubble between. This the sheikh pointed out as the limits of the territory of the "old Christians*" of Wády el 'Ain and Gaseimeh, the limits of the

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* "Christians" is the name given by the Bedawín to the former inhabitants of the country in which they dwell, for they regard themselves as conquerors or immigrants from the peninsula of Arabia Proper.

Muweilih Nasára's (Christian's) country being a range of hills a little to the east of the mountains of the same name. There were also some water-springs near our tents, the 'Ayún Gaseimeh, the position of which is marked by a melancholy-looking bed of rushes. They are not deep wells, nor springs proper, but a few *themáil*, or shallow pits. The neighbourhood of our camp, being at the confluence of Wády el 'Ain, Wády Gaseimeh, Wády es Serám, &c., was a large open space, interspersed with groups of low hills. The tops of the latter are covered with primeval remains, which here present a new feature, pillars of stone accompanying the cairns and circles on the most prominent summits. An Arab of the Gudeirát tribe came up soon after our tent was pitched, and abused us for stopping the rain! but at sunset the wind went down and a few drops fell, which entirely retrieved our character in his eyes.

Here also two caves form the principal objects of attraction. One is about 43 feet long by 20 feet wide; it is apparently an old quarry, and has three large pillars supporting the roof, on the same plan as the Egyptian quarries. The roof has not been squared like the chamber walls, which would probably have been the case had it been intended for a dwelling. The second cave is merely a square cutting in the rock, without pillars. At the mouth of Wády el 'Ain the hill-sides are covered with paths and walls, and the bed of the wády has strongly-built dams extending across it, and is filled with mezári', or sowing-fields, and the surrounding hills are covered with innumerable stone remains. The view from any of these hills is very fine, the outline of the Muweilih, Serám, and Gaseimeh mountains being rather more picturesque than usual, and the prospect sufficiently extensive to be even grand.

Crossing over by the caves to the mouth of Wády el 'Ain, we ascended a hill, to enjoy the view and to sketch in some of the country round. There is a large open plain covered with scattered ranges of hills, at the debouchure of Wády el 'Ain and the neighbouring valleys, but it does not (as the old maps make it) form a break in Jebel Magráh; neither does Wády el 'Ain itself come down straight from the heart of the mountain, for it takes a curve round an outlying block.

As we proceed northward from this point, the marks of former cultivation become more and more apparent at every step. The wády beds are embanked and laid out in fields, and dams are thrown across to break the force of and utilise the water. The hill-sides are covered with paths and terraces, and everywhere there is some trace of ingenious industry. It was clear that, though all around us was still barren and desolate, we were leaving the ancient desert behind us, and entering upon the borders of the South Country.

obtained by getting a track of them. When we had camped for the evening, Sheikh Suleimán came into our tent, with a very grave face, to say that the Arabs would not allow us to come near the neighbouring ruins at El Birein, for which we were bound. He declared that the 'Azázimeh were encamped in the very midst of them, and would, if necessary, prevent us by blows, adding that "they were terrible ruffians to deal with." We answered that any one who assaulted us would get a bullet through his head. "Then," said he, "they would kill us; we are only eight, and they have over a hundred guns." "Never mind," said we, "you know your brother is bound to carry on the blood-feud if you are killed." An Arab always avoids, as far as possible, the ill-omened mention of death, and we rightly judged that our cool contemplation of his demise would have a shattering effect upon his nerves. Moreover, as he had been for some time harping on the horrors of Birein and the 'Azázimeh, and had been sending emissaries with mysterious messages on to their camp, we shrewdly suspected that he had prepared a little row for our reception, in order to practise on our fears and extort a larger sum of money from us.

Early next morning, we crossed the hills on the eastern side of Wády Serám, and came down Wády Umm Ebteimeh into Wády Birein; in both these valleys were terraces laid out for cultivation, and one or two ruined houses built of hewn stone. The sheikh again pictured to us the horrors of going amongst the Arabs, but we insisted that his fears were all nonsense, as they dared not molest us, and that, if they did, we would shoot the first man who touched us, and so involve him and them in a feud. At this he completely succumbed, and sent one of the camel-men forward to prepare for our reception. When we arrived at Birein, we found a great number of the Terabín and 'Azázimeh Arabs encamped there with their flocks and herds, but, instead of *our* having anything to fear at *their* hands, we found *them* in mortal terror of *us*. This was in a great measure owing to the fact that (as we subsequently found) our men had spread about the report that we were Turkish military officers.

Wády Birein is a broad valley, taking its rise in Jebel Magráh, and filled with vegetation; grass, asphodel, and *'oshej* grew in great profusion, flowers sprang beneath our feet, immense herds of cattle were going to and fro between us and the wells, and large flocks of well-fed sheep and goats were pasturing upon the neighbouring hills. Numbers of donkeys, and some horses, the first we had seen in the country, were also feeding there. We encamped beneath the shade of a fine *butmeh* tree (a species of terebinth); there are nine of these in the valley, very old ones, and their gnarled trunks and spreading branches present an extremely picturesque appearance. The valley has been enclosed for purposes of cultivation, and banked-up terraces (called by the Arabs *'ugúm*), to stop the force of the *seils* and spread the waters over the cultivated ground, extend along the whole length of the wády-bed. On the southern bank of the valley, amidst ruins of houses and other buildings, is a *dowár*, or stone circle, larger than those of Biyár and Lussán, but of precisely the same construction, and carefully built. A little lower down on the same side are the foundations of a square building and of a tower, but no traces could be discovered of any church or temple. Opposite the *dowár* are two deep wells, built with very solid masonry, and surrounded with troughs for watering the flocks and herds; one of them is dry, the other still yields good water, and is about twenty-five feet deep. Besides the troughs, there are circular trenches, fenced round with stones, for the cattle to drink from. A man in the airy costume of our first parents was always to be seen drawing water for the camels, hundreds of which were crowding around to drink. When the camels had finished, the flocks came up; it was a curious sight to see the sheep and goats taking their turns, a few goats going up and making way for a few sheep, and so on, until the whole flock had finished. A little farther on is the *fiskíyeh*, a large reservoir, with an aqueduct leading down to it from the wells. The aqueduct is on the north-east side of the valley; it is well constructed and firmly cemented; the channel for the water is about eighteen inches wide and sixteen deep, and built on huge blocks of stone which support it from below and give the proper level; above it is a row of huge boulders, arranged so as to protect it from the falling *débris* and torrents. The *fiskíyeh*, or reservoir, is built of rather roughly dressed but squared stones, the courses of masonry, which are eight in number, running with great regularity vertically as well as horizontally. It has been originally plastered on the inside with hard cement, some of which still remains on the walls. Around the top of the walls is a path some eighteen inches wide, and above this are two more courses of masonry. The earth outside the tank has been piled up to within three feet of the top, and the remains of buttresses are still to be seen around it. From the hill above, the ruins of El ‘Aujeh can be plainly seen. The surrounding heights are covered with cairns, some of which seem to have been dwellings, but they are in so dilapidated a condition that their nature and use cannot be easily discovered. By the wells are many traces of buildings and enclosures, and walls are visible in every direction.

We spent the whole of the day after our arrival in carefully examining all the ruins: while Drake was photographing, and I myself sketching at the *fiskíyeh*, we were surprised by some of the bloodthirsty Arabs, against whom Suleimán had warned us. They took the shape of two little Arab children, wearing most comical top-knots on their shaven heads, who ran away screaming horribly with fright at the sight of us. An Arab lady also watched the camera from a safe distance, evidently expecting it to go off. Our appearance, and the stories propagated by our worthy guides, seemed to have stricken terror into the hearts of the community. One old man whom we met asked me a variety of questions about the Canal, and about the Sultan, whose representatives he supposed us to be; it was some time before he could be put at his ease. ‘Eid, the sheikh of the ‘Azázimeh, hung about the camp the greater part of the day, and was very civil. At Suleimán’s request, I smoked a pipe at the camp-fire, and repeated to an admiring audience my denunciations of the infidels who believe that Christians either wish to stop the rain or have the power of doing so. At night Suleimán came to tell us that the Arabs had demanded black mail, but we grumbled horribly, and declared that the ‘Azázimeh were mere *fellahín*, or, instead of demanding money from us, they would have given us a sheep at the very least.

Having stayed a couple of days, we struck camp and proceeded down Wády Birein, past the wells and ruins, as far as the mouth of the wády where it unites with Wády Serám; the whole way was marked by signs of cultivation and fertility. As we were going along, one of the ‘Azázimeh Arabs came up to us, accompanied by a woman with a bad cutaneous disease, and besought us to give him some remedy. Having nothing else by us, we wrote her a charm, and the old man received it with a profusion of thanks, regretting that he was too poor to be able to pay for it. At this juncture, Selím appeared on the scene; he had been sent to prevent us from talking too much with the natives, of whom our own rascals had tried to make us afraid, and, asking us rather peremptorily what we were stopping for, he told us to come on. At this, we both flew into a frantic rage, and made such a disturbance that Suleimán, to appease us, cursed Selím's father and mother (an unnecessary proceeding, as I had already done so myself), and promised to beat him in the evening for his insolence.

At a point a little below the junction of Wádies Serám and Birein, Wády Hanein comes in: it is a broad open valley, taking its rise in the heart of Jebel Magráh, and running down into Wády el 'Arísh. This name, Hanein, has never before been breathed to European ears, the Arabs always speaking of it to strangers as Wády Hafír. The reason of this reticence is that there exists an old tradition among them that, "should a *seil* once come down Wády Hanein, there would be an end to all prosperity in the land." The name is thus considered by them of evil omen, and by no means to be mentioned to Christians, people who are thought to possess such mysterious influence over the rainfall. The tradition evidently dates from ancient times, and alludes to the admirable art with which the valley is dammed up, or rather laid out in terraces with strong embankments; these would make it simply impossible for any flood to rush through the valley, and would distribute the waters of a torrent equally over the surface of the cultivated terraces, instead of allowing them to rush unimpeded down to the sea, as they would do in other valleys unprotected by such art. It might well, therefore, be said that, if a flood once came, it would put an end to all prosperity, for it either could not come at all, or, if it were strong

was still standing, and a few broken columns were lying about among the *débris*. There are also three wells, now dry, but one of them in a very perfect state, the roof and wall which protected it still remaining entire. The Arabs call it Bir es Sákiyeh, "the well of the water-wheel," and the circular pavement whereon the animals turned the wheel is still visible. The black, flint-covered hill-slopes which surround the fort are covered with long regular rows of stones, which have been carefully swept together, and piled into numberless little black heaps. These at first considerably puzzled us, as they were evidently artificially made and intended for some agricultural purpose, but we could not conceive what plants had been grown on such dry and barren ground. Here again, Arab tradition came to our aid, and the name *teleilat-el-'anab*, "grape mounds," solved the difficulty. These sunny slopes, if well tended, with such supplies of water and agricultural appliances as the inhabitants of El 'Aujeh must have possessed, would have been admirably adapted to the growth of grapes, and the black flinty surface would radiate the solar heat, while these little mounds would allow the vines to trail along them and would still keep the clusters off the ground. I have in a previous chapter alluded to the importance of this discovery, and its bearing upon the topography of the Exodus.

A little above the ruins, on the western side of the valley, is a large cave or quarry, with wide pillars supporting the roof, something like the one at Gaseimeh but on a much more extensive scale, its dimensions being 265 ft. by 95 ft. The light breaking into the cave at various intervals, and the jagged and massive appearance of the columns, give the place an extremely picturesque appearance. When in camp that night, the sheikh began after dinner to upbraid Selím for his impertinence to us during the day, and stated his intention of beating him. Selím prayed for mercy, but Suleimán was obdurate, and there came a sound of thrashing accompanied by loud lamentations from the victim. The whole thing was a farce, as Suleimán had, no doubt, himself sent Selím to prevent us from talking to the 'Azázimeh, and had acted thus merely in order to clear himself now that his plot had failed. The blows sounded suspiciously as if given upon a camel saddle, but the moral effect was the same. Since the lamentable *fiasco* of Suleimán's attempt to frighten us, he had taken to a fawning, abject demeanour that was almost as amusing as it was disgusting.

The next two days we remained at El 'Aujeh, to examine the place more thoroughly. We first proceeded to the cave, which we sketched and photographed, and then visited the ruins on the hill, where we took measurements and made plans of the fort and church. The church is in better repair than the other buildings; some of the walls at the south-east corner measure 23 ft. 6 inches in height, and 8 ft. in thickness; the others are about 15 ft. high. Both the church and fort are built of squared and dressed stones, cemented by a light mortar, almost

C F Tyrwhitt Drake, photo.

M & N Hanhart imp

like mud, and by no means so strong as that used in the construction of the *fiskíyeh* and aqueduct in Wády Birein. The church is oblong, 122 ft. long by 48 ft. wide, and has three apses; that on the north side still shows traces of a fresco, though a Greek Σ and some marks of paint are all that is now visible of it. On the south side is a smaller chapel, with a chamber behind it, and there are two others at the west end. The partition walls are not more than two or three feet high. Many broken fragments of columns are lying about, with square capitals; these are surrounded with rings, which give them the appearance of having been turned. There was no trace of ornamentation, except on two fragments of stone, which bore a simple quatrefoil pattern; nor could we discover traces of inscriptions in any of the ruins, either upon the hill or in the valley beneath; but there are some scratches of Greek letters, and in one place a rude drawing of a ship on a stone in the outer wall. The walls were originally plastered inside. The orientation is not exact, being about east-south east. The fort is 272 ft. by 107 ft., with remains of an arched entrance 14 ft. wide. On the west side is a door, five feet wide, and a flight of steps leading from it down into the valley. At the east end is a large white wall, fifteen feet thick and about twenty-five feet high; this is the "castellated rock," described by some travellers who have only seen the ruins from afar *en passant*; in it are remains of beams, showing the height of the different stories. Beyond the wall is a circular well, shallower and of much ruder construction than the others in the same neighbourhood; it was not improbably used formerly as a *matamore* or corn-cellar. Farther on are the foundations of a small tower, and at the extreme end a large deep well, thirty-five feet of which is built of solid masonry, and the remaining forty-one feet is cut in the solid rock; it is ten feet square. This and the three wells below, amongst the ruins in the valley, are all of precisely the same construction. They are square as far as the masonry extends, the corners having ledges or brackets of flat stones at distances of five feet, probably for cross beams, or some method of descending into them. The tops are covered in by two arches, with a space of about thirty inches between them, the whole being protected by a stout roof of concrete and rubble. This aperture was evidently made for the water-wheel, and the well worked like an ordinary Egyptian *sákiyeh.*

Leaving the neighbourhood of El 'Aujeh we crossed over the low hills on the north-western side of Wády Hanein, and, descending into Wády Abu Rútheh, camped after a short day's march, as we had to send some distance for water. The spring from which we obtained our supply was called El Hasaineiyeh, and consisted only of a few *themáil.*

On our way, we passed an immense number of the "grape mounds" already alluded to; and in one place noticed a large reservoir, and the ruins of an ancient wine-press. In the course of the afternoon two of the 'Azázimeh came up, and at first saluted

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us most respectfully and quietly, but, after an amicable cup of coffee, they suddenly got up while we were engaged in cooking our dinner, and upbraiding Suleimán for taking strangers to El 'Aujeh, went off in a rage.

Having heard of a site called Sebaita, we determined to visit it, and had crossed the hills into Wády el Abyadh with that intention, when Suleimán came up, and expatiated upon the danger of the attempt, begging us to go by the regular road to Ruhaibeh instead. Seeing that we were determined to follow our original plan, he consented to accompany us, though in a very ill temper, and in two hours after leaving camp we reached Wády Sideríyeh, where we pitched our tent. Staying only a few minutes, to eat a piece of bread, we crossed the hills at the head of the wády, and in about ten minutes found ourselves at a ruined fort called (probably from its commanding position) El Meshrifeh.

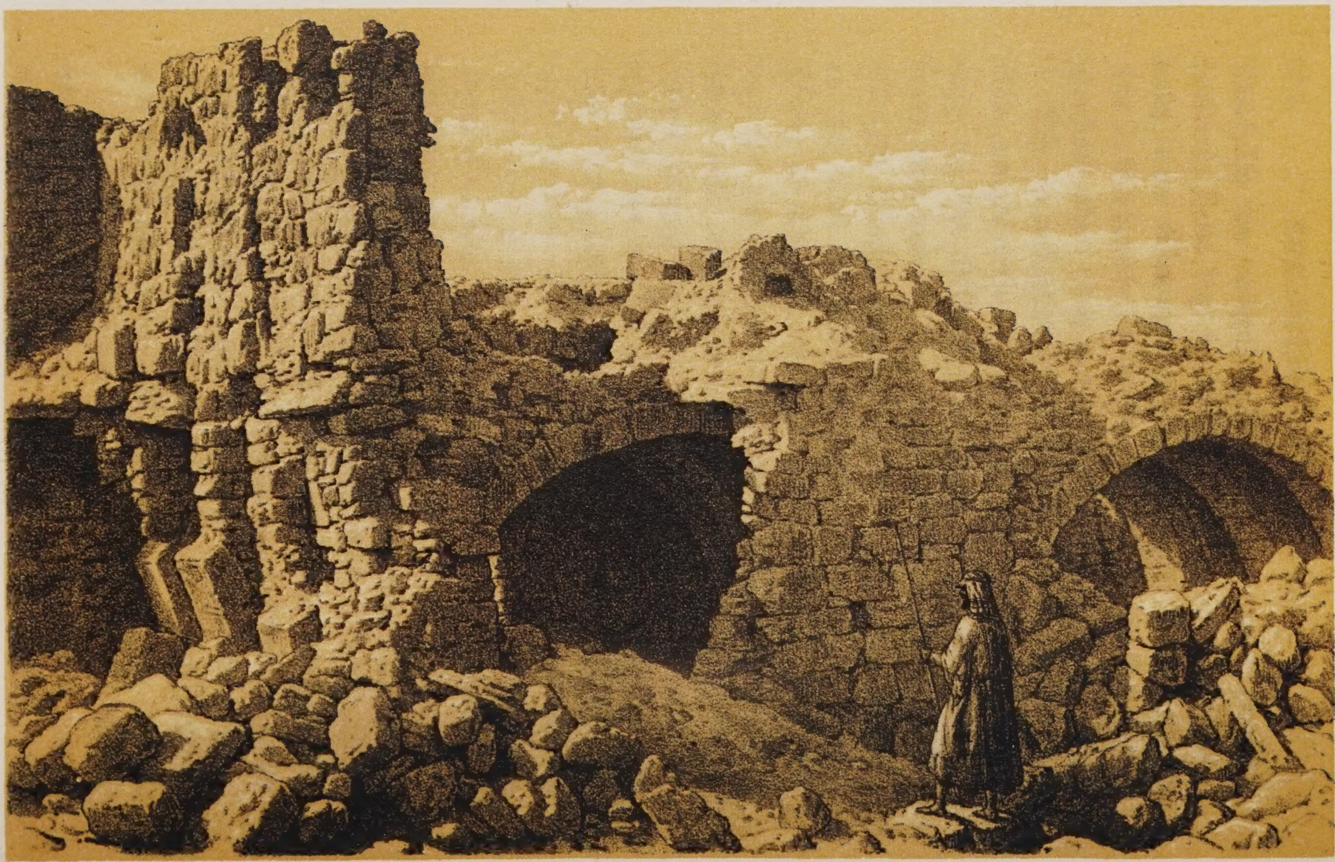
The fort consists of a walled enclosure on the top of a hill, protected by three large towers on the southern side, one on the eastern, and one on the western, with a series of escarpments and bastions on the southern and most precipitous cliff, extending right down into the wády bed. The rocks immediately beneath the summit, and behind the first lower tier of escarpments, are excavated into caves; these are fronted with masonry in such a manner as to form a series of chambers in which sentinels or sharpshooters might be posted. The most westerly of them is of a ruder construction than the rest, and the wall in front is constructed with large unhewn stones, apparently of a much earlier date. A little farther on is one which has the end cut into the form of an apse, and, although it has but a low roof, looks like a small chapel. The masonry throughout is solid and compact, some of the hewn blocks of stone being of immense size. At the lower part of the escarpments are traces of an earlier and ruder masonry, over which the present structure is raised. The walls are strongly built, for the most part of unhewn stones; the western one however is composed of squared blocks, and has several loopholes and the remains of a large doorway still visible in it. In the centre is a building about 40ft. square, with three chambers at the west end and a larger open space at the eastern. In front of this are three circles, carefully built round with upright stones, and sunk a little below the surface. They lead one into the other, and measure severally 50ft., 25ft., and 12ft. in diameter, the last one being composed of small stones merely piled round. Judging from the arrangement of these and from analogous structures which exist in Europe, I should incline to the belief that these circles are remains of the primeval fort with which the hill was already defended before the erection of the buildings, the ruins of which we were examining. The prehistoric races appear to have been keenly alive to the advantage of such spots as this for purposes of defence, and had no doubt fortified it long before even the ancient substructures of the existing fort were raised. The walls of the building, and of the church, which still remain are from 10ft. to 12ft. high. The towers are of a peculiar construction, being built with very thick walls, and in a series of tiers, with "pigeon-holes" about 3½ft. high; the front of one has fallen down, showing the section. The chambers in the towers were also strengthened by arches, one of which is still visible and in a good state of preservation. The church within the enclosure measures 40ft. by 20ft., has a semicircular apse at the east end, and a side chapel on the south, the plan being the same as that at El 'Aujeh.

The view from the top of the wall is very fine and commanding. Wády el Abyadh, some miles broad, and extending to the base of Jebel Magráh, sweeps in a semicircle round the hill on which the fort stands. It is not laid out in terraces like Wády Hanein, but there are many vestiges of agriculture, especially on the more elevated portions, every one of which has been taken advantage of for the cultivation, it would seem, of vines, as the same ridges and furrows, the *teleilat-el-'anab* which we noticed at El 'Aujeh, are to be seen everywhere in the neighbourhood. The surrounding and opposite hills also have many *'ugúm* (walled enclosures for cultivation) on them. About three miles and a-half to the south is seen Sebaita itself, which is a town of considerable size. Wády es Sideríyeh, in which we were encamped, also contains some ruins which resemble wine-presses, and every little gully is carefully embanked and built up with rude masonry.

The hills are covered with paths at very regular intervals from top to bottom; many of these must have been vine-terraces, though some are no doubt due to the nature of the limestone, the regular strata of which often wear away into similar shapes.

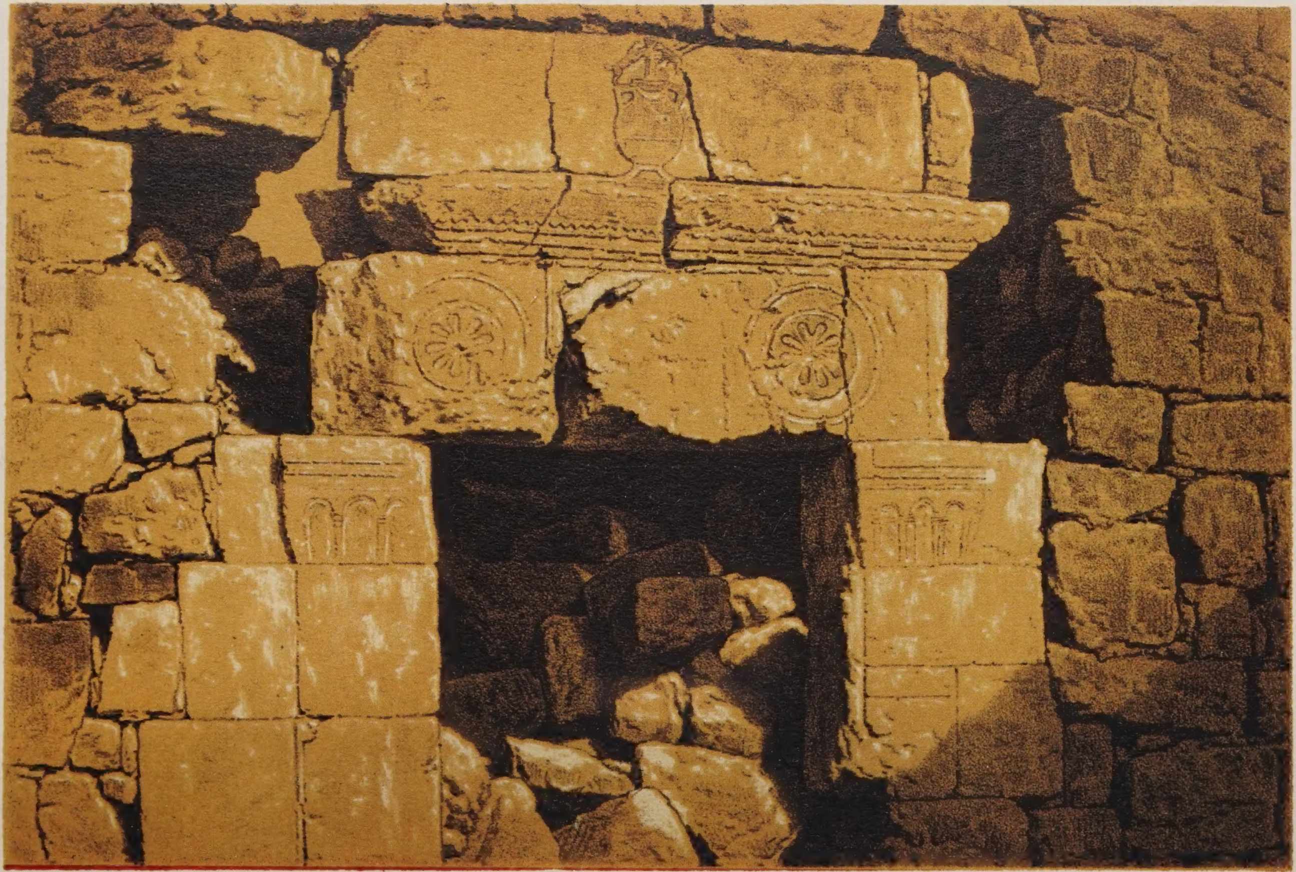
The examination of El Meshrifeh and its immediate neighbourhood occupied us the whole of the day; on the following morning we made an early start, and, leaving the camels to follow after, started off with Sheikh Suleimán. Crossing over the hills at the head of Wády Sideríyeh we descended into Wády el Abyadh, and made for Sebaita. On our way we passed several deserted vineyards and gardens, and one or two ruined buildings, probably either wine-presses or store-houses. In an hour we reached the ruined town, and at once prepared to take photographs and make plans, as the Sheikh was very anxious for us to conclude our observations before any of the Arabs of the place came up. He seemed on this occasion to be really apprehensive of meeting with them, and as soon as we had entered the ruins he made a hurried inspection, to assure himself that no stray Bedawí was lurking there with mischievous intent. After this he posted himself upon the apse of the church, and kept an anxious look-out until the camels came in sight. The men, when they did arrive, camped in a secluded hollow, and would not set up the tent till sunset.

Sebaita is situated in the Magráh es Sebaita, which takes its rise in the mountain of that name, and drains into Wády el Abyadh. The ruins are



C.F.Tyrwhitt Drake photo.

M&N Hanhart imp



C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake, photo.

M & N Hanhart imp

GATEWAY OF TOWER AT SEBAITA.

by far the most imposing and considerable of any which we had seen, and the Arabs themselves say, "*A'azem min el 'Aujeh w'el 'Abdeh má fi, illa Esbaitá a'azem minhumá,*" "There is nothing larger (or grander) than El 'Aujeh and El 'Abdeh, except Sebaita, which is grander than either." They have also a tradition that there was once a war between the people of El Meshrifeh (the fort which we had visited the day before) and those of Sebaita, in which the latter were victorious, as they were superior in numbers and wealth. Their gardens (which may still be seen covering the plain around the city) were fruitful and well-kept, and the hills all around were covered with orchards of apples and pomegranates, and terraces of clustering vines. The ruins, as they now stand, consist of a city about 500 yards long, and from 200 to 300 yards wide; it lies north and south, bending round towards a branch of Wády el Abyadh. The town is very strongly and compactly built, and contains three churches, a tower, and two *fiskíyehs,* or reservoirs for water. The houses are built of stone, square-hewn blocks being placed in the upper part and undressed ones at the bottom. No timber beams are used in the construction, probably because wood must always have been scarce in the country, even in the time of its fertility; but the want is most skilfully supplied, all the lower stories being built with arches about three feet apart and two feet wide, long thick beams of stone being placed across them to form the roofs. The accompanying illustration will exemplify the architectural peculiarities of the town. There are numerous wells, about two feet in diameter, and covered with square stone blocks having holes cut in them, not unlike the coal-cellar traps in English pavements. Nearly every house has its well, and they are also conveniently placed in all the corners of the public thoroughfares. The streets are still plainly to be traced, although the level of the soil has been considerably heightened by the fallen *débris* and rubbish. The outer buildings are either walled in or strengthened with additional masonry, and present a series of angles like a fortification. There are also traces of an older and very thick wall surrounding the town.

Sebaita contains three churches: first, the great church at the north end of the town; this is of the same pattern as those at El ʻAujeh and El Meshrifeh, having three apses and a side chapel. It measures forty-nine by twenty-one yards inside, but nearly half of this length is taken up by a building apparently added at some later date. From the appearance of this, and others immediately adjoining it on the south side, we came to the conclusion that there must have been an extensive monastery connected with the church. The walls are of considerable height, those of the centre apse standing about thirty feet; they have been strengthened at a later period by rude but massive masonry, built up in a slope against the original wall; this plan is also to be seen in those other buildings of the town, which, like the church, are more exposed than usual, from their proximity to the outer walls. The remaining two churches are situated nearer the centre of the town, and are of smaller dimensions, measuring sixty-six by forty-seven feet each. In the apse of the more northern one is some rude paint ornamentation still visible upon a small arched niche in the centre, and also some vestiges of a fresco. These churches are all built upon precisely the same plan, and evidently belong to about the same period. There are in every case three apses at the east end, the north one appertaining to the *skeuophylakion,* and the south to the *gazophylakion;* in this they resemble the churches of St Demetrius and St Sophia at Thessalonica. But though the interiors are similar to, the exteriors are unlike the ordinary Byzantine basilica type; for, being generally situated in very exposed spots, the outer walls have been protected by additional masonry until they present rather the appearance of fortresses than of churches. They may probably be referred to the fourth or fifth century. The history of the Christian Church of the Negeb is now quite lost, but it is more than probable that it perished either under the invasion of the Persian Khosroes, or that of the Caliph Omar.

The tower of Sebaita stands a little south of the church last-mentioned; it is about twenty feet square, and the stories (like those at El Meshrifeh) are built with the stone arches before described. On the side of the tower is a small arched doorway, having a rude sculptured ornamentation over it, consisting of three circles, with crosses between, and surmounted by an urn, from which a palm-tree is growing, supported by a lion rampant and a griffon standing upon the handles. This, too, shows traces of having been covered with red and blue paint. There was no other ornamentation to be seen or discovered about the place, except a few fragments of stone, with the same simple star or quatrefoil pattern which we found at El 'Aujeh, and some fragments of columns, which, we noticed, had the same rude turning-lines which we remarked at the latter place. No inscriptions of any kind were to be found. The houses are all of one type, consisting of small arched chambers, with niches here and there, and a little courtyard; in one of the niches was a cross, rudely chipped out in the side. Many of the walls stand from twenty to twenty-five feet high. The *fiskíyehs* are two irregular-shaped reservoirs, with a flight of steps leading down into them. On reaching camp, the Arabs had just seated themselves comfortably to eat a morsel of bread, when a startling shriek resounded through the valley; all were immediately on the *qui vive,* seized their guns, those who had none borrowing ours, and rushed away, thinking that some of the 'Azázimeh had made off with the camels. Shortly afterwards, however, they returned, in high spirits with Selím, who had shot a gazelle, the cause of all the excitement being that he was shouting to find the camp. In a few minutes the creature was in the pot, boiling.

The name Sebaita is etymologically identical with the Zephath of the Bible. Zephath signifies a watch-tower; and it is a noteworthy fact that the fortress of El Meshrifeh, discovered by us in the same neighbourhood, exactly corresponds to this, both in its position and in the meaning of the name. I would make one more suggestion respecting this site: Zephath has always been considered as identical with Hormah; and, in Judges i. 17, it is thus spoken of: "And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah." May we not understand the word "Zephath" in its proper signification, and consider "the city," after all, as separate from the tower or fortress thus attacked and destroyed? The city, which was protected by so commanding a fort, might well be spoken of as the City of the Watch Tower; and, as so important a position would certainly not be neglected by later inhabitants of the land, I think it not improbable that in El Meshrifeh we see the site of Zephath itself, and in Sebaita that of the city of the "Zephath," to which the Israelites, after their victory, gave the name of Hormah.

A circumstance which gives a great additional interest to this spot is that the Israelites, we are told, when they attempted to force a passage into the hill country of the Amorites, were driven back, and defeated at a pass in the mountains near Hormah. Now, the fort of El Meshrifeh commands the only pass by which the plain where Sebaita, or Hormah, stands can be approached, and we may thus trace the movements of the wandering Hosts of Israel after the encampment at Kadesh. In every respect the site answers to the description given in the Bible. The distance of Sebaita from ‘Ain Gadís is only about twenty miles ; the names Dheigat el ’Amerín (Ravine of the Amorites) and Rás ’Amir—the former a valley cutting the range of hills to the north of Sebaita, and the latter a chain of low mountains fifteen miles to the south-west of El Meshrifeh—seem to point to the identification of this neighbourhood with the Hill Country of the Amorites, and the scene of the battle, after the return of the spies, mentioned in Numbers xiv. 40—45. There is also a place called Sheikh el ’Amirí in the immediate neighbourhood of El Meshrifeh.

Proceeding along the Magráh es Sebaita for three hours in a north-easterly direction, we came to a small wády in the low sand-hills, where our sheikh had been told that we should find water. Vineyards and gardens, with here and there strong buildings in the midst, had been visible in great numbers for some distance after leaving Sebaita; but in about an hour and a half all traces of cultivation ceased. Here we halted, intending, if possible, to get on towards Ruhaibeh the same night, after filling the skins, but there were so many of the Arabs of the neighbourhood at the pools that a delay occurred, and we were obliged to camp where we were. The water is found in three little pits (*themáïl*), and these are only filled from the *seils*, not being perennial springs; they are called Themáïl et T’ráshed. Near this point Wády Dheigat el ’Amerín comes into the plain from Jebel Magráh. While waiting for water, we ascended one of the neighbouring sand-hills, to look out for Ruhaibeh, and noticed through the glasses a string of camels in the distance, upon the regular road, some of them having riders whom we conjectured to be European travellers. An old Arab, a friend of Suleimán's, came up to our tent with a black slave —an ugly, stupid-looking African negro, and offered to sell him to us for £10.

Walking for some hours over the hills at the back of our camp, and across a broad valley called Wády ed Dhaba'í, we came to a white mound, in which was a cave measuring 34ft. by 51ft., with rock-cut chambers all round it; it had evidently been used as a place of sepulture, and was similar to the rock-tombs so common in Palestine. Up to this point we had not met with any vestiges of cultivation since leaving the Magráh, the hills being all covered with drift-sand brought from the shore of the Mediterranean; this was shown by the appearance of the bushes, all of which were bent in one direction and covered with sand on the side facing the sea. Passing the cave, however, the familiar *'ugum* and enbankments again became visible in the wády-beds; and numerous ruins, as of country and garden houses, were scattered over the hills. One of these was of considerable extent, consisting of two blocks of buildings, altogether about 100ft. long. Amongst the ruins was a broken capital, with a simple but well-carved Corinthian pattern upon it. Half an hour further on to the west were the ruins of a city, some caves, and an old well, with immensely massive masonry, pointing to a very ancient date. Reserving our investigation of this place for the next day, we went on to camp, which was pitched in Wády Ruhaibeh, and then, taking the photographic instruments with us, we proceeded to some other ruins which were situated in the latter valley a few miles from our tents. On our way we started a herd of gazelles, one of which Suleimán succeeded in bringing down. In the evening we were visited by a Bedawí poet, who recited some very fair verses of his own over the camp-fire, and also repeated some poems of the celebrated East-of-Jordan chief, Nimr el ʻAdwán.

A strong hot wind began to blow early the next morning and made it very uncomfortable for work. However, shortly after breakfast we set off for the ruins which we had discovered the day before. They were situated in Wády es Saʻdí, and consisted of the remains of a small town, but in so ruinous a condition that it was impossible to make out what the plan of it had originally been. The buildings were of a different character to those at Sebaita, there being, for instance, no trace of any such architectural device as the arches on which the floors of houses in the latter place are built. From a little distance the place seems a mere collection of stone heaps, but on approaching it more closely one can define here and there the course of a street, and see a wall or the corner of a house standing out in a somewhat better state of preservation than its neighbours. We could not find any traces of a church. On the north-east side of the wády are the remains of a wall, some cairns and a large circular mound of stone, exactly like those which we had noticed at Serám and Wády Lussán. The town is about 400 yards long by 150 yards broad, and lies due north and south. On the north-east side of the wády, opposite to that on which the ruins lie, is an ancient well, the troughs and other masonry, which still remain, being of immense proportions and apparently of very great antiquity. One of the troughs is round, the other circular and cut in blocks 6ft. by 5ft. by 6ft. Judging from the proximity of this well to Ruhaibeh, and the appearance of the masonry, which is more massive and antique than that of any others in the neighbourhood, we deemed it far from improbable that it is the well of Rehoboth, which we are told in Genesis xxvi. 21, 22, that Isaac dug. The term Rehoboth (spaces) being in the plural, may well apply to any or all of the valleys between these low sloping hills, and the name Ruhaibeh, which still lingers in the neighbourhood, may be a reminiscence of the more general title, though now confined to a single spot.

Leaving Sá‘dí, we visited some ruins which stood upon the hill-side overlooking our camp, and found them to consist of square towers built of massive masonry and divided by an interior partition wall; there are also a good number of outbuildings around them. In the wall of one of them, which still stands about 20 ft. high, is a loophole, and above this a small stone ornament like an imitation or miniature *macciacoulis.* The surrounding hills are also covered with ruins, indicating that in former times the district was thickly populated.

Passing down Wády es Sa‘dí, we came into Wády er Ruheibeh, and, about a mile up that valley turned off again into a side valley called Wády el Bir. Here are the remains of another large town, much more important in size than the remains at Sa‘dí, but in even a more desolate and confused state of ruin. Like the others, they are situated on the hill-side above the wády, and in the valley-bed below is an edifice covering the old well of Ruhaibeh. This is now so filled up with *débris* as to be scarcely distinguishable; indeed, neither Drake, myself, nor the Arab who was with us on our first visit, could discover the site of the well until its situation was pointed out to us by Suleimán, close beside the edifice in question. This building consists of a series of chambers, the centre one being covered with a dome; down the walls run square grooves leading from apertures at each corner of the ceiling, and probably intended to drain the roof; the larger inner chamber has arched niches on either side. The whole is strongly built, and the interior has been plastered over, while here and there brick is used in the construction. The place where the well is said to have existed is marked by a piece of fallen masonry, apparently the roof of a cupola, and strongly put together with flat brick-shaped stones and cement. There is no other well than this in the Wády Ruheibeh itself, but on the sloping sides of

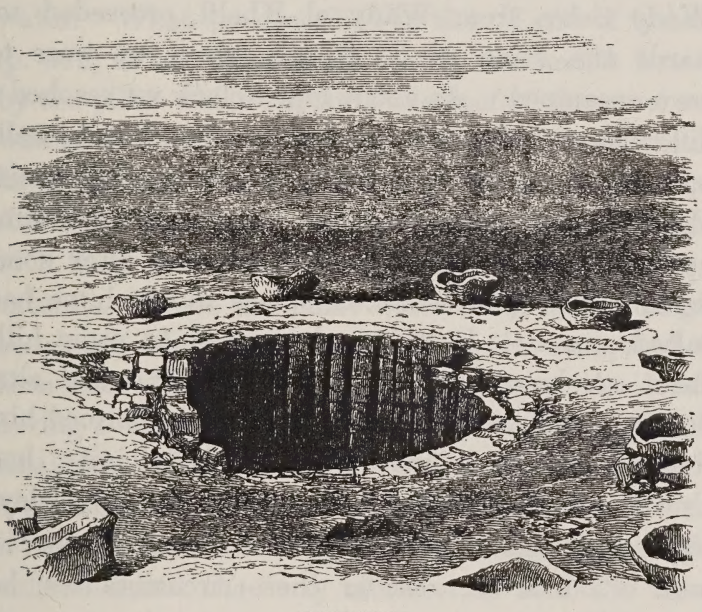
Wády el Bir, in which the ruins are situated, are numerous wells, reservoirs and cisterns. Each of the wells has a large square stone placed over it, with a circular hole for the mouth. The cisterns are partly built of masonry and partly cut in the solid rock—one which we examined was about 40 ft. square—but all of them are now dry and for the most part filled up with *débris.* Below the well-house are the remains of what, from its shape and situation (lying east and west), we concluded must have been a church; and just below the town itself is a large *fiskíyeh,* or reservoir, also half composed of masonry and half cut in the solid rock. Walls, *'ugúm,* and other traces of cultivation, are abundant in the neighbourhood. A little beyond this the wády opens out and receives the name of "Bahr bela mi" (the waterless sea), and on the left comes in a small valley called Shutnet er Ruheibeh, in which name are preserved both the Sitnah and Rehoboth of the Bible. (Gen. xxvi. 21, 22.)

Crossing a few small wády beds and some low hills for about two hours, we reached Khalasah, once a flourishing town, where Venus was worshipped with all the licentious pomp of the Pagan ritual, but now completely levelled with the ground. The valley in which it is situated is called Wády 'Aslúj; though, a little lower down, the wády takes the name of the town. There is no such name in the neighbourhood of these ruins as Wády el Kurn, mentioned by Dr Robinson. The ruins are extensive, but so utterly destroyed that it is impossible to make out what the original ground-plan might have been, though the course of one broad street can still be traced. The inhabitants of Gaza are in the habit of removing the stones for building purposes, and have thus nearly cleared the site, in many cases actually digging out the foundations of the houses. There is a well, with good but rather brackish water, to the south-west of the town; another circular well, now blocked up, is also found in the wády-bed; and on the hill-side a little above it are the foundations of a building, and a large cistern covered in with strong masonry and originally furnished with a roof like that at Ruheibeh. In one of the ruined sites in the town itself we found fragments of a marble entablature ornamented with a rude sculptured pattern.

Leaving Khalasah amidst a thick haze, which entirely obscured the horizon, and with a sharp storm of dust blowing in our faces, we crossed the Rumeil el Hámid, a series of rolling hills covered with drift sand. In two hours and a quarter we reached Wády Martabeh, and on the hills which divide this from the small Wády Khazálí we found remains of a building and a reservoir; this spot we conjectured to be one of the stations on the old Roman route to ʻAkabah, for near it is a road which, Suleimán told us, leads to the spring of Martabeh a little lower down, and another going up the wády into Jebel Rakhmeh, and joining the road to ʻAbdeh, which crosses Wádies Martabah and ʻAslúj.

In four hours from Khalasah we reached Wády Sebaʻ; our Sheikh, Suleimán, in order to get paid for as many days' travelling as possible, had been in the habit of making long détours in proceeding from one place to another. As this enabled us to see more of the country, we feigned ignorance and winked at the imposition; but on the present occasion we had no object to gain by taking a devious route, and accordingly insisted upon going to Beersheba by the straightest road. Poor Suleimán was much disconcerted to find that we had all along been aware of his devices, and still more astonished that, without having visited the country before, we knew in which direction Beersheba lay. He could not conceive it possible that any "writing or spy-glasses should tell us *that*." We reached Beersheba a little before sunset, and our first impressions of the place were anything but favourable. To our eyes it presented an aspect far different to that described by previous travellers; for, such had been the severity of the recent drought that the herbage was entirely burnt up, and in place of rich pasturage there was nothing but a dry, parched valley, bare and desolate as the desert itself. This state of things had compelled the Bedawín to move off with their flocks and herds, and seek more fertile spots; we were therefore unable to find camels to take us back into the mountains, without going up to Hebron, as our Arabs dare not venture so far beyond their own borders. In the morning a shower of rain fell, and prevented us from leaving the tent until eleven o'clock, when we visited the ruins and wells while the camels were loading. Two of the wells are filled with water, and one is dry: they are built of fine solid masonry, and are in a tolerably perfect condition. In the immediate neighbourhood are also traces of the other four wells which once existed there; and Arab tradition informs us that "The Beni Murr dwelt by seven wells (Seb'a Biyúr), each well had seven tanks, each tank had seven troughs, and each trough had seven horses drinking thereat." The opposite (southern) side of the valley-bed is banked up, to prevent its falling in, with a stout wall of ancient masonry; this extends, however, only for a few hundred yards along the part immediately opposite the wells. The hill-side behind them is covered with ruins, but the stones have been so entirely removed or destroyed that nothing now is left but the foundations, and these are so confused that very little can be made out as to their original plan. Higher up in the wády, and just above the easternmost well, the ground-plan of a perfect Greek church, with a semicircular apse, can be plainly distinguished; the foundations are, however, quite level with the soil. Near the buried wells are the remains of a trough or cistern composed of layers of stones embedded in concrete, a form of masonry which may be also observed in some of the other foundations.

The country around consists of a rolling plain or down, intersected by the wády-beds of Seb'a and Khalíl, and would, no doubt, be very pretty, as a contrast to the desert which we had just passed through, were there any verdure or herbage upon it; in the condition it then presented, there was absolutely nothing to relieve the eye. In other years, the Arabs told us, it is covered for miles around with grass, flowers and herbage, but during the past year there had been so little rain that nothing would grow.



BEERSHEBA.

Beersheba is perhaps one of the most interesting spots in the desert, connected as it is with some of the earliest scenes of Bible history. The deep well of massive masonry upon which we gazed was in all probability the identical one dug by Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, himself. The name, Bir Seb‘a, which he gave it still clings to the spot; the Bedawín, to whom the Scriptures are unknown, still point with pride to the great work which their father Ibrahim achieved ; and, as they draw water from it for their flocks, the ropes that let the buckets down still glide along the same deep furrows in the masonry by which the Patriarch's servants let down theirs.

At one o'clock we left Beersheba, and, striking across the north-west edge of the hills which divide Wády Seb'a from Wády el Khalíl, proceeded towards the ruins of El Haurá, where we were to have encamped. At about four o'clock we reached a hill, with some stone heaps and remains of rude walls upon it, and at its base some pits for storing grain. Here we were joined by our camel-men, who came up in a state of great excitement, and after some prevarication told us that the place in which we had halted was not Haurá, and pointed to some hills about an hour's journey distant as the real site. Suleimán declared that some Arabs had informed him that the Gaisíyeh, who dwell in the vicinity, had already commenced hostilities against them two days before, and that if we went there it would be at the peril of our lives. Under these circumstances, he implored us to camp where we were, and not to go. But as we took the news very coolly, and laughed at his real or assumed terrors, he at last professed himself ready to make a flying visit with us, and begged us to go well armed. We at once assented, when he made a final appeal to our feelings, and painted in glowing colours the risk to which we were exposing ourselves. "*Yellah,*" we replied, "cut along!"; and with fervent ejaculations for protection from Allah, he started off. We followed him over the plain at a brisk trot for nearly an hour, (fatiguing work after a hard day), and a little before sunset reached the hills on which the ruins stand.

The first thing which we visited was the cave mentioned by Dr Tristram, which, although it still retained traces of moisture, did not then contain any water. What are described in the "Land of Israel" (p. 382) as two tunnels are merely two arches formed by the pillar which supports the roof of the cave, and which, if the water covered the pillar itself, would have the appearance of tunnels. On the right-hand side is a niche with another similar arch, but the mud in it is so deep that it is impossible to say how far it extends. There are many other caves in the neighbourhood, which have been built up or excavated to form reservoirs, and one large excavation also exists having a circular opening like those at El 'Aujeh and Khalasah. There are also a great many wells, all of which appear to communicate with a system of cisterns or reservoirs undermining the hills. The place might well be called the "city of cisterns," and the name Haurá, indeed, has some such primary signification. The ruins cover the crest of a long triple hill, and are of considerable extent; the houses are formed of large blocks of flint-conglomerate, the squarest having been selected, and built in like huge hewn stones or bricks. These flinty blocks, not being exposed in these latitudes to their only enemy, severe frost, may have defied time and the elements for ages, and seem likely to do so still. The houses are about 30 ft. by 20 ft., and generally consist of a single chamber; one large building has the appearance of a temple. Long lines of walls, wells (one with a piece of limestone masonry and a cornice still remaining), and a concrete trough, are also to be seen. In the distance, and bearing about N. 85° E., we could distinguish the ruins of Sa‘áwí. We met none of the formidable Arabs against whom Suleimán had warned us (for which both he and Selím, who had also accompanied us, seemed really thankful), and we got back to camp by dark. Subsequently, however, we learnt that the Arabs had spoken truly, and Suleimán's fears had been not unfounded; for a blood-feud had commenced between the two tribes, and, had we met any of the hostile party, these notes would in all probability never have been given to the world.

Strange and solemn are the thoughts inspired by such a journey as that which we had just taken. Long ages ago, the Word of God had declared that the land of the Canaanites, and the Amalekites, and the Amorites should become a desolate waste; that "The cities of the Negeb shall be shut up, and none shall open them" (Jeremiah xiii. 19),—and here around us we saw the literal fulfilment of the dreadful curse. Wells of solid masonry, fields and gardens compassed round about with goodly walls, every sign of human industry, was there; but only the empty names and stony skeleton of civilisation remained, to tell of what the country once had been. There stood the ancient towns, still called by their ancient names, but not a living thing was to be seen, save when a lizard glided over the crumbling walls, or screech-owls flitted through the lonely streets.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF PALESTINE.

The approach to Palestine. Dátraiyeh. Ed Dhaharíyeh; modern Horites. Hebron; visit to Sheikh Hamzeh. Jerusalem. We start again for the desert. The Jehalín Arabs. Tell ‘Arád. El Milh. Journey through the heart of Jebel Rakhmeh and Jebel Magráh. Difficulties with the Arabs. Proclamation of war against us. El ‘Abdeh.

THE next day we entered Palestine and left the desert region of the South Country, but there was little to remind us of the fact except that the brown mould beneath our feet was hard with the fibre of dried vegetation, that the hills and plains showed traces of the plough, and that in the wády-beds might be observed an occasional streak of refreshing green grass. We noticed a large flock of pigeons and a flight of cranes, as well as four gazelles browsing in the distance. Cattle and flocks there were none, for the drought that year had driven all the Arabs far from the pasture-lands of Beersheba.

The next morning we walked over the rolling country through which Wády el Khalíl runs, and passed upon our way many wells, cisterns, and other indications of former fertility and habitation, which even then, notwithstanding the drought, were sufficiently marked to present a striking contrast to the desert we had just left. At the end of the hour and a-half, we came to some ancient ruins called Dátraiyeh, situated on one of the hills which form the entrance to Palestine proper. They consist of walls and houses of solid masonry, some of the stones employed in their construction being of immense size. The basements are for the most part built on arches, somewhat after the style of architecture prevalent at Sebaita. There are numerous wells about the city, most of them apparently connected with a large system of excavated reservoirs on the hill-side. Leaving this place we crossed over a small mountain-pass, and found ourselves in Wády Dhaharíyeh. Here the hills were covered with vegetation, and the *bállúteh*, or dwarf oak, began to appear; the valley itself is banked up with strong walls, *'ugúm*, and terraces, which have evidently been kept up from ancient times, as the hill-sides are covered with them even in places where there is now no cultivation. In three hours and a-half from camp, we reached the village of Ed Dhaharíyeh, which stands upon a hill, at a broad, open part of the valley, and is surrounded with fields and cultivation. At the foot of the hill are two fine olive-trees, by one of which we pitched our tent. Ed Dhaharíyeh, at the first glance, or to the traveller who merely passes by and does not venture into the place itself, presents nothing to distinguish it from an ordinary Arab village, and may seem to confirm the remark, given in "Murray," that "there is nothing of interest there to detain the pilgrim." But, on ascending the hill, we found it, on the contrary, a very interesting place. The dwellings consist for the most part of caves cut in the natural rock, some of them having rude arches carved over the doorways, and all of them being of great antiquity. The spots selected for these excavations are small terraces on the hill-side; these are walled round with mud fences, and form a sort of court-yard in front of the cave itself; in this the dogs, goats, chickens, children, and other members of the family take the air. They are exactly like what the old Horite dwellings must have been, and have doubtless been inhabited by generation after generation since the days of that now forgotten race. The village is evidently an ancient site; in the midst of it is the basement of a building of massive masonry containing three arched apartments. These are tenanted by myriads of fleas, who made a furious onslaught upon us when we intruded into their domain, and we came out literally swarming with them, shaking and brushing them by hundreds from our arms, legs, and clothing. Old arches and other remains of antiquity appear at every corner of the village. One which we entered is now used as a coffee-shop by the *fellahîn* who inhabit the place. We were very well received by the Muslim population, who, though thieves and scoundrels, are a cheery set, and gave and received "chaff" in the most good-humoured manner. As we walked by their dwellings, women (who, strange to say, are here all unveiled and all ugly) rushed out of the caves, and screamed in excited and angry tones, "*bádh djá-á-j!*" The unlearned might have taken this for abuse, and beat a hasty retreat from the apparently frantic Amazons, but we knew that the words merely meant that they had eggs and chickens to sell. The whole of our evening was taken up in settling with Sheikh Suleimán, who went away positively content with his *bakhshîsh,* though, true to his Arab character, he begged for a series of small articles to the last.

We rested at Ed Dhaharíyeh for the night; and in the morning, after a long squabble with the head men of the place, we were compelled to submit, under protest, to the imposition of paying two dollars a-piece for four camels, and began to strike our tent and pack up by ourselves. Some time after noon we got off, but, owing to the laziness and stupidity of the fellahín who came with us, we did not reach Hebron until past sunset. We camped over against the Quarantine, and, after abusing our *fellahîn* soundly, for having robbed us of a crowbar and tried to steal a rope, we made a *maga'd* (*i.e.* semicircular shelter) of the boxes, and prepared to pass the night Arab fashion, *sub Jove,* one of us always keeping on the watch. But the Mudír, a good-humoured old *effendi* who rules the Quarantine, would not hear of it, and very politely insisted upon our coming inside the building, where he gave us a room to ourselves, and sent us up a dinner of rice mixed up with oil and onions, together with some bread, and *dibs*, or syrup of raisins. This he went through the show of preparing with his own hands, and we, being both hungry and tired, ate it with a relish and turned in. At a little after seven in the morning, we awoke, and could at first hardly realise the fact that we were once more in an inhabited place, but, having made a simple toilet, we turned out upon the terrace in front of our room, and gazed on the city of Ibráhím el Khalíl. It is an irregular white town, much such a place as Sebaita must have been before it fell into ruins. On the east side, and at the highest point, is the Haram, or sacred enclosure, containing a Christian church, with a minaret added to turn it into a mosque—not a particularly imposing sight in itself, but one of the deepest interest as being beyond all question the very spot in which the Patriarch Abraham is buried; nay, more, it is almost certain that his bones lie in the mysterious cave of Machpelah, beneath the pavement of the building. The town occupies the eastern side of a dip in the hills of Judah, at the bottom of which is a grassy expanse, covered for the most part with Jewish and Mohammedan graves. After a cup of coffee with the *effendi*, at the gate of the Quarantine where we had passed the night, we sallied forth into the town, accompanied by one of the servants of the establishment, took a hasty glance round the Haram from the outside, and walked through the streets and bazaars of the town. Here we met with Sheikh Hamzeh, already well known to English readers as having accompanied Dr Tristram on his interesting journey described in the "Land of Israel." The old fellow would insist upon our visiting him at his own house, which is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Haram, and apparently once formed part of the monastery attached to the establishment during the Christian occupation of the country. Passing through a low arch and a dark cellar-like corridor, we ascended a flight of steps which led us to the Sheikh's apartments. In an open court on the first floor were several male and female members of the Hamzeh family taking the air; they directed us up another flight of stairs to the reception room itself, a little square apartment with a stone vaulted roof, cleaner than most Eastern rooms and covered with some decent carpets. As soon as we had seated ourselves, a door opened and disclosed the form of a young and rather pretty woman, a newly made addition to the list of old Hamzeh's wives, who, after taking a careful survey of us, suddenly seemed, or pretended, to remember that she was unveiled, and then retired with a becoming blush. Presently her son, an intelligent little fellow about four years of age, appeared, and offered us a piece of cold oily omelette, and a cake, which we ate as an appetiser before lunch and washed down with some excellent coffee. Hamzeh and his grown-up son, 'Abbás, having meanwhile made their appearance, a capital lunch was served in native style; and, as we had long ago lost our forks, and been reduced when in the desert to eating with our fingers, we had no difficulty in subscribing to Arab etiquette on this occasion. After our meal we arranged with Sheikh Hamzeh, who is the authorised agent of the Jehalín Arabs, to provide us with camels on our return to Hebron, from which place we intended to start for our second excursion into the desert.

By four o'clock the next day we were in Jerusalem. Our journey had been a most interesting one, though not without its anxieties and risks. The Arabs were very different from the "gentle Towarah" of Sinai, and it had been no easy task to overcome their prejudices and their fears, or to extract from them the information which we required. The whole of the journey—nearly 600 miles—from Suez to Jerusalem was performed on foot; and, as we had no servants, all menial and domestic duties devolved upon ourselves. This, with the route-sketching, making plans, and other work, left us but little time for repose; and although Mr Tyrwhitt Drake, in addition to his own investigations, devoted himself with great energy to assisting in the other objects of the expedition, yet we seldom worked less than from fourteen to sixteen hours in the day.

At Jerusalem we received the greatest kindness, both from the European and native residents; and I cannot refrain from taking this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Mr N. T. Moore, the English Consul, and to H. E. Kámil Pasha, for the assistance given us in making the arrangements for our subsequent journeys, as well as for the facilities afforded us in our work at Jerusalem itself. Our disreputable appearance, the absence of servants, and the unusual circumstance of our having walked in from Egypt, made us objects of great curiosity to the mass of the inhabitants, and saved us from much of the annoyance consequent upon the importunities of dragomans and *laquais de place.* One of the latter did attach himself to our service for the first day, but the sight of his self-adopted masters returning from market, with a handful of onions and other comestibles under their arms, so disconcerted him that he forthwith absconded in search of more orthodox travellers.

Having procured the necessary provisions for the trip, and exchanged our tent for a much smaller one, we left Jerusalem amidst a violent storm of wind and rain, and returned to Hebron. On the 22nd of March the old sheikh, Hamzeh, with whom we had previously made arrangements for the journey, came to say that the camels had arrived, but the day was so wet and stormy that we could not venture to start. The old fellow begged without success for several articles, such as a *kefíyeh* or a turban, and began to make objections to visiting several places; but, as we threatened to dismiss him at once if any difficulty occurred, and to treat for ourselves with the sheikhs of the country, he gave in and promised to go wherever we chose. Some of the Jehalín Arabs, who were to take us, now made their appearance; one old fellow named 'Eisá came up and tried to learn from us the amount of hire which we had promised to the sheikh for each camel. We, however, refused to satisfy his curiosity; and at last, by way of "chaffing" him, I said, "How much will you give me to tell you?", which observation he took quite seriously, and went off in disgust at my mercenary spirit. We also received a visit from our host, the effendi, or Mudír, of the quarantine establishment.

At sunrise on the following morning we were up and ready, and had scarcely done breakfast when old Hamzeh brought the camels; wonderful to relate, we got all the loads, and an Abyssinian boy whom we had engaged as a help, without any trouble or disturbance, upon the four beasts for which we had agreed. By nine or half-past we were on our way, and had left the towers of Machpelah behind us. It was still very wet and stormy, and the wind, as it blew bitterly cold across the hills of Judah, made our walk anything but a pleasant one. In about an hour and forty-five minutes we passed a ruined town on a hill to the left, called Khirbet Abu Hamám, where a round tower in a fair state of preservation was the only noticeable feature. At a turn in the wády immediately after this were some caves; one of them, without sepulchral *loculi*. We were now upon the scene of those eventful passages in the life of David, when, fleeing from the persecutions of Saul, he led the life of a Robber chieftain on the borders of the Wilderness of Paran. Ruined sites were passed in quick succession and the names they bore —Tell Zíf, Ma'ín, Kirmil, and the like—were scarcely changed from those given to them in Samuel's time.

After a short day's march we reached Wády Sebbeh, and turned off towards a camp of the Jehalín Arabs, who were quartered there with about forty tents, in the midst of which we pitched our own for the night. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and a cold rain was falling at intervals. The Jehalín tribe seems to have been much maligned by travellers; they are as intelligent as the average Bedawín, and the four that we had with us were willing and active fellows enough. We found them quite as tractable and good-tempered as the Towarah, and quite as poor, if external appearances are to be trusted. They have a feud with the 'Adwán, and dared not promise to take us farther than Wády Músa.

In little more than an hour after leaving camp, we came to Tell 'Arád, the site of the city of that ancient Canaanitish king who, when he "heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners." (Numbers xxi. 1.) It is nothing now but a large white mound. Turning after this somewhat out of our road we made a short excursion to Keseifeh, a considerable ruin extending along the ridge of a hill. The buildings were all too dilapidated to be very readily distinguished, but there was a small church with a circular apse and two monolithic columns still standing, and several broken columns were lying about. We found also traces of a pavement made of coloured stone *tesseræ* like a rude mosaic.

Another hour brought us to Tell Milh, the site of the ancient Moladah. Here are two wells of fine masonry at the foot of the hill, one of them dry and the other containing good water, surrounded with marble troughs like those at Bir Sebâ. The tradition of the Arabs is that Abraham used to water his flocks here as well as at Beersheba, and that it was he who dug the wells. His dogs are said to have worn collars of gold. The lower hills to the right of the *tell* are covered with ruins, also too much injured by time for any plan of the city to be discovered; but, from the traces of walls and foundations which lie about, it must have been a city of considerable extent. We camped in Wády Gabáb es Sháwarí, so called from two *gabáb*, or domes, situated about three-quarters of a mile to the east of our camp, which seem to be the remains of an old Mohammedan cemetery. The larger building is a tomb of the ordinary pattern, open, with an arch facing each way, and covered with a dome. The smaller building would seem to be a *welí*, or saint's tomb. The walls inside and out are covered with Arab tribe-marks, and various old graves lie scattered round it. Our little camp was visited by parties of the 'Azázimeh and Dhallám Arabs; the former "hoped we would not stop in their country longer than we could help, but would visit what places we required, 'and depart out of their coasts.'" They were the first Bedawín we had seen in these parts who carried spears.

After a good night's rest we rose at sunrise, and got off by eight o'clock. We crossed a broad rolling plain called Johl el Ghúleh, and in an hour and a-half reached Wády 'Arårah, the Aroer of Judah, one of the cities to which David after his victory over the Amalekites sent a share of the spoil (1 Sam. xxx. 28). Here the only relics of the ancient city are a few wells, two or three of them built up with rude masonry, and some of them containing water. Wády 'Arårah rises in a cleft (*thilmeh*) of the neighbouring mountains called El Menjel, the wády on the other side being called Es Sirr, where there are also said to be some ruins. The character of the country now began to change, rolling hills and stony valleys taking the place of the open prairie land through which we had hitherto been passing. It was evident that we were once more entering upon the confines of the "great and terrible wilderness;" the vestiges of ancient habitation occurred at much longer intervals, and, with the exception of a small group of dismantled buildings (probably a way-side station on the old Roman road), we found no more ruins until we reached Wády Rakhmeh. Here we found some wells and the remains of a town, but they are so scattered and covered with surface soil as to be scarcely visible above ground. Here too we had a quarrel with old Hamzeh about carrying water, and camped on the spot in order to have it out. On making up matters, the old Sheikh waxed very communicative, and told us many a tale of Arab warfare. It seems that, when Hamzeh was a boy (he puts it at forty years ago, but it must be much more), the Ma'ázeh from Arabia Proper and the Arabs of Gaza invaded this part of the country for the sake of the pasturage, whereupon the Gaisíyeh, Jehalín, ‘Azázimeh, Arabs of Khalíl, Terabín, and Teyáhah assembled against them and expelled them from the country. A great battle was fought near Abu Tulúl, a place in the vicinity of our camp of the night before, when more than eight hundred men fell, and one hundred and fifty horses were killed.

Turning out of Wády Rakhmeh, we walked for about an hour over El Magráh, a broad depression in the mountains, which receives the torrents of many small ravines. At the end of this was a small *nagb*, or pass, with some large cairns and a few graves on the watershed; it brought us to a sloping plain, not unlike that of Er Ráhah in Sinai, and bounded by two low ranges of mountains on either side, from which it receives the name of El Jebail. Here we found the ruins of a small building called Heddet Emhannah, probably a station on the same old caravan-road, traces of which we had noticed in Wády Abu Taráfí, and at other places.

We were now fairly inside the unknown and mysterious mountain region which we had so long wished to explore, and our pulses quickened with the excitement. We felt that we were on the eve of solving a geographical problem which had occupied our attention for months past, and, if there were any truth in report, we were in a fair way of meeting with some dangerous adventures. From El Jebail we passed through a narrow opening in the mountains into another plain of much greater extent and covered with herbage, upon which a number of the ‘Azázimeh Arabs were pasturing their flocks. The structure and drainage of this portion of the plateau has been less understood than any other, but we had at last reached a point from which the whole system became intelligible. The outlet from El Jebail is called Wády el Baggár; it flows for a short distance in a south-westerly direction over the plain just spoken of, and then, taking a sharp turn to the north, passes through the Dheigat el ‘Amerín, where it joins the network of valleys north of Ruheibeh and is carried down to the Mediterranean. On the west and south-west of the same plain the mountains attain their highest elevation, and in these, two main valleys, Wády el Abyadh and Wády Marreh, take their rise; the first flowing westwards into Wády el ‘Arísh, the second cutting through the eastern slope of the plateau and finding its way down to the Arabah and Dead Sea. A steep pass, called the Nagb el Ghárib, at the south-eastern corner of the plain leads down into Wády Marreh, and towards this we directed our steps. The view from the top is very impressive; as well as the precipitous cliffs which everywhere meet the eye, huge *jorfs*, mountains in themselves, rise up on either side of the wády bed, and shew that it is only cut through the deep alluvial deposit of which the plain is formed. The valley reminded us of Wády Muweileh, but is on a much more gigantic scale. It is broad and level, broken, however, by various rolling hills and mounds; and, the rocks being of limestone and not relieved by any verdure, produce a glare that is most distressing to the eyes. Descending the pass we went for about half an hour along the valley to the west, after which we turned up a wády called Emka‘ab, and camped in a small branch of it, near some water, which, by the way, was very salt and filthy to the taste. Here we met one of the ‘Azázimeh Arabs and arranged with him to guide us to ‘Abdeh, and afterwards through Jebel Magráh to Wády Jeráfeh, making first a *détour* to Jebel Maderah. He came with the understanding that we were not to require him to go into the ‘Arabah, as he was afraid of the Kerek Arabs, between whom and his tribe there is a long-standing blood-feud; as we wished to go through the mountains, this exactly suited our views.

In the middle of the night we were awakened by the report of a gun, and immediately the whole camp was up in arms and a brilliant fire lighted. It seems that an ‘Azzámí Arab had skulked up to the tent, seeking what he might devour, but a dog, by which he was accompanied, attracted the attention of ‘Alí, one of our camel-drivers, who straightway fired at the intruder. The latter made off, and the excitement was caused by all our men rushing about after him. In the morning the sheikh of the ‘Azázimeh, with a select company of friends, came to the camp, much incensed at our intrusion, and swore that no one should go up to the ruins without payment of an exorbitant *bakhshísh;* but, getting only curt answers, they went off in high dudgeon, declaring that they would prevent us from ascending the pass. However, we determined not to have our journey for nothing, and immediately after breakfast we took our sketch-books, surveying and photographic instruments, and started off in spite of their threats. Proceeding up to the head of the valley, (Wády Emka‘ab), we found a very steep and difficult pass, to the top of which our opponents were hastening; when they saw us coming after them they got into a terrible rage, and bade us get back and be off out of their country as soon as possible, if we valued our lives. As we still kept on they waxed more and more excited. A little boy at this point came upon the scene, and, hearing the sounds of war and seeing the martial appearance presented by our own party, he thought that his last hour was come, and, crying bitterly, besought us not to kill him. We quieted his fears and gave him a small coin, for which and for his life he seemed extremely grateful.

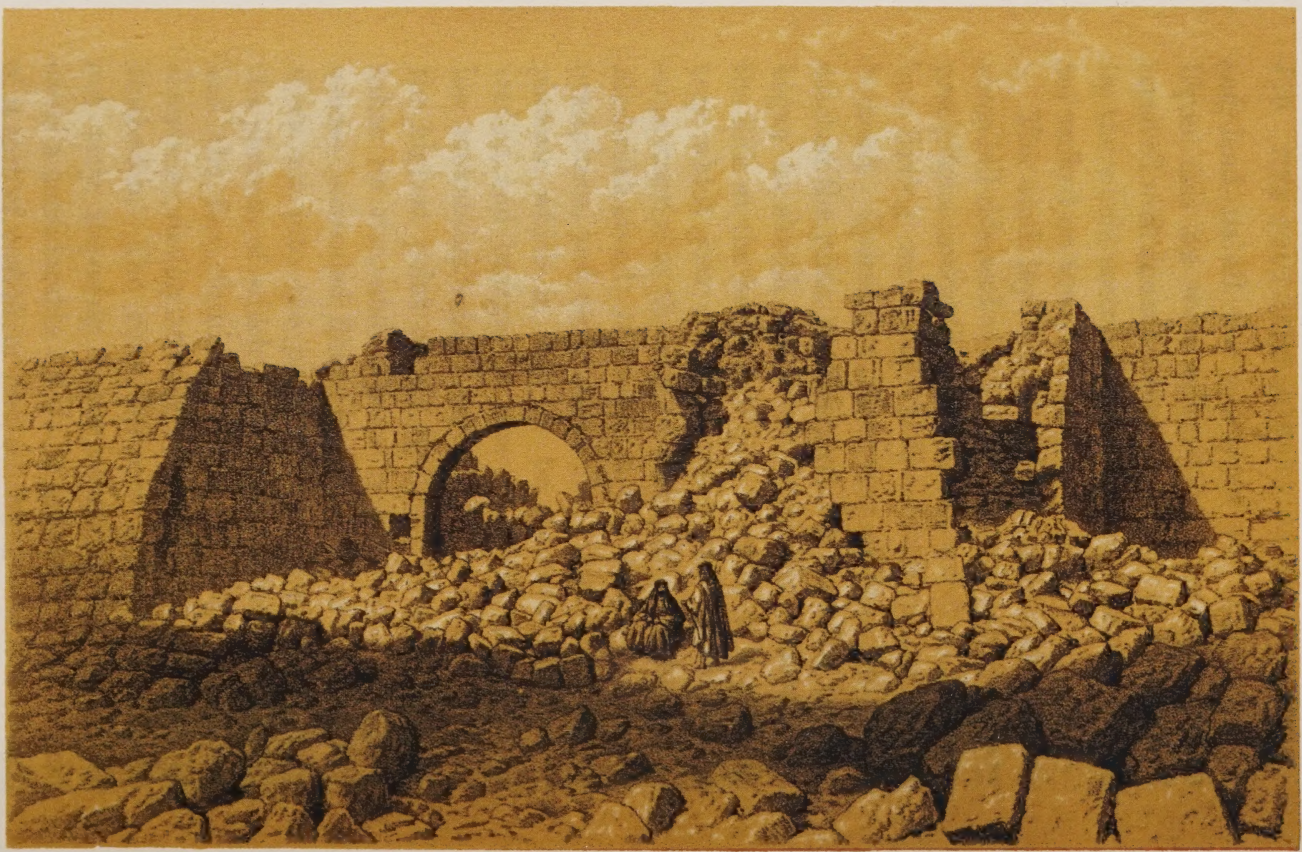
Now, we knew that Arabs are never anxious to commence a fight, and bring upon themselves the dread consequence of the blood-feud, so we sat down, and, holding our guns in readiness, smoked our pipes complacently, and answered all their threats with quiet chaff.

But the disturbance continued; every moment we heard the loud reports of guns firing above us, and in clear determined tones the Arab war-song rang in our ears. Still we plodded steadily on, but, as we commenced the ascent, a dozen armed

Arabs suddenly rushed forward, and nimbly scaling the mountain-side took possession of the pass; and while some began throwing stones over the edge, others presented their guns at us, and the Sheikh, with his bare arm raised in a tragic attitude, treated us to a grandiloquent address, and threatened us with summary annihilation. "Get back, O Bedawín!" said he; "if you come a step further it is at the peril of your lives; for by the living God, if any one sets foot here we will roll him over as we would an ibex." So poor Selámeh, who had been sent up to offer terms of reconciliation, had to come back, and ‘Own, our other man, went up with an offer of thirty piastres. His approach with Selámeh, who again tried his luck, was the signal for a fresh outbreak; he was met with drawn swords, and literally thrust down the pass, closely followed by a large stone.

Matters were now getting serious; the Arabs lit a beacon-fire on the top of the pass, screamed out in frantic tones, "*Hallat el gom*," "war is proclaimed!"—as a signal for their neighbours and friends to rush up to the attack. It was time to interfere, so I made them a pretty speech, telling them that our intentions were quite peaceful, and expressing my surprise at being treated in such a manner by people whose guests we had become. A long altercation ensued, and peace was ultimately concluded on condition of our paying the sum of eight shillings, they on their part undertaking to conduct us over the ruins, carry our instruments, and lend us all the assistance we might require. Upon this we were allowed to ascend, and were received with due ceremony on the top; then, attended by the whole assemblage, besides our own two men, we walked on towards the ruins.

The road lay over a broad terrace, up another steep hill-side, and across a plateau in which was a very precipitous ravine (like those at Sarábít el Khádim, but having water and a few dwarf palms at the bottom). Crossing another line of hills we at last reached the ruins, and after resting for a few minutes began to sketch and work. ‘Abdeh is situated in the hills at the head of Wády Marreh, on a promontory which juts out into the valley much in the same manner as those upon which El ‘Aujeh and El Meshrifeh stand; the west end of this is sheer and precipitous, and commands a fine view over the vast plateau, which is seen to be intersected by deep wádies, and broken up here and there by ridges of low mountains. In those to the west, which form the highest point of the prospect, Wády el Abyadh takes its rise, and Sebaita is situated (though of course, concealed from view) just where that wády flows out into the plain. The precipitous end of the plateau, of which I have just spoken, is escarped and the face furnished with an arrangement of chambers, similar to those described as existing at Meshrifeh. The ruins lie east and west, and are not very imposing in appearance, although they cover a considerable extent of ground. They consist of a sort of *casbah*, or fort, adjoining which is a small



C F Tyrwhitt Drake photo.

Hanhart lith.

GATEWAY AT EL 'ABDEH, EBODA.

collection of dwellings and outbuildings; these are also encompassed by a wall and form a second enclosure attached to the fort, with which it communicates by a gateway at the south-east corner. The architecture is evidently Christian, for we found a cross sculptured over one of the doors. Some of the walls remain standing to the height of about 15ft., and are composed of very regularly squared stones. To the south are the ruins of a small town or village, but no plan can be made out of the arrangement as at Sebaita. In the valley, below the fort to the west, is a house, in a very perfect state of preservation, but we had not time to visit it. At a little distance from the town, on the south-east, is a cave (probably once used as a reservoir) in the hill-side; here the Arabs believe that a "pot" (*gidr*) full of wealth lies buried. All the better sort of houses are built within the walled enclosure; the promontory on which this stands is defended on the land side by a stout wall, and in the centre of the fort is a large and well-built reservoir.

The surrounding plateau shews traces of having once been under cultivation, and there are many of the mounds for training grape-vines, which I have before noticed. Here they are called *rujûm el kurûm,* or "vineyard heaps," and in appearance and arrangement are exactly like those found in the neighbourhood of Sebaita and El 'Aujeh.

As we came down again from the ruins we stopped to beg a drink of water at the tents of some 'Azázimeh; they were the most bare, wretched, savage dwellings I have ever seen. One half-clad, middle-aged woman, a very old one, three or four quite naked children, and a waterskin, were the only furniture of the tent.

A little before sunset we reached camp, and old Hamzeh waxed furious and foul-mouthed at the recital of our adventures; when presently the 'Azázimeh appeared to claim their black-mail, a great and terrible row ensued, and, some one having called our sheikh the "father of a dog," we were obliged to restrain him by main force from using a sword which he had snatched up. A bright thought struck Drake as the sheikh of the 'Azázimeh was counting out his money; we asked for the pipe which that chief was smoking, and which he had made with great labour out of a stone and valued highly. He gave it with an ill grace, and one of the others whispered to me to restore it; however, I thanked him politely, and to his great disgust kept the trophy. At last they went off and we dined in peace.

Here and at other places where no Europeans had before ventured, we overcame very serious difficulties at a trifling cost; but elsewhere, where the ill-advised liberality of M. de Saulcy, the Duc de Luynes, and others has raised the expectations and excited the cupidity of the Bedawín, we were often compelled to pay extravagant sums before we could prevail upon them to shew us a single thing. The invariable answer to our remonstrances in such cases would be, "The Emír thought it worth so much, and if you don't like the price you need not go."

That part of our journey which lay through districts previously visited was beyond all proportion more expensive than that through unknown parts of the country; and, while professing ourselves able to deal on fair terms with the Bedawín, we were powerless in the face of such precedents as "the Emir's" lavish *bakhshîsh.* Had we given in at first to the 'Azázimeh, they would have demanded pounds instead of piastres, and we might, by paying these demands, not only have saved ourselves some unpleasantness, but have effectually closed 'Abdeh against all but millionaires. As it was, neither our purses nor our inclinations sanctioned such a course, and we preferred trusting to firmness and patience for success.

The discovery of the real site of Eboda is important in a geographical point of view, as Dr. Robinson and others have identified it with El 'Aujeh (ruins which I have described before), and the existence of an ancient road from Gaza to Petra and Akabah, passing through the 'Azázimeh mountains, has consequently remained a matter of great doubt.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE 'AZÁZIMEH.

Wády Marreh. Rujúm Ahmadí; Arab battle-fields. Legend of Jebel Maderah. Interior of the mountain plateau. Wády Hanjúrat el Gattár. Wády Rámán. Direction of the old Roman road. Identification of Gypsaria. Wády Ghamr. Concluding remarks on the identification of the Negeb of Scripture.

Leaving El 'Abdeh we walked on down Wády Marreh for about seven miles, amidst scenery as dull and uninteresting as can well be imagined. The wády-bed is filled with fine white sand, broken *jorfs* rise up here and there, and ranges of low and perfectly featureless mountains on either side complete the picture. Those on the right hand are called Es Shahabíyeh; those on the left El Hadhirá. At the eastern extremity of the latter range is a broad plain, called Abu Taraibeh, into which debouches a wády, called Wády er Rákib; on the mountains north of this stand the ruins of Kurnub. Presently the plain between the two mountains (or rather the cutting in the plateau, for such it really is), along which Wády Marreh runs, becomes blocked up by low irregular hills, through which the path takes one or two sharp turns. In the entrance to the little pass thus formed are two small stone heaps, each with a flat stone lying beside it, on which is cut a rude cross, the mark of the hero Ahmadí, whose exploits they are placed to commemorate. Ahmadí and Jirmí are the names of two warriors who, Arab traditions tell us, came this way, and opposed single-handed an invading force of 500 horsemen, slaying every one. Just past the heaps, which are called Rujúm Ahmadí, is yet another, at the head of Wády Maderah, a stony-bedded valley which rises near this point. It has the same cross beside it, and is covered with tributary tufts of grass placed thereon to mark the spot where the hero bathed after the heat of the bloody fight. We found a supply of good rain-water collected in some pools close by. This Wády Maderah receives the waters of Marreh, and broadening out shortly afterwards flows round to the north by Jebel Maderah itself, after which it falls into Wády Figreh and is so carried down towards the Dead Sea. Four miles lower down, the ancient road, which we had hitherto been following, branches off into the mountains of the 'Azázimeh by a valley called Umm Tarfá. We were surprised to hear from the Arabs that Jebel Maderah lay only a little farther on in the wády of that name, as the maps represented it to be still some distance off. Sending on our camels therefore, with orders to camp in the Wády Umm Tarfá, we proceeded to ascertain if the information was correct. After two miles we reached the foot of the mountain, and sketched in this, together with the neighbouring passes of Yemen and Sufáh, over which lie the roads from Hebron to Petra.

Jebel Maderah is a round isolated hill; on the base and summit are numerous blocks of stone, concerning the origin of which the Arabs tell the following legend:—"A people once dwelt here, to whom there came one day some travellers seeking hospitality; but the people of the place did unto them a vile and horrible deed, wherefore the Almighty, in his anger, rained down these stones upon them, and destroyed them from off the face of the earth."

The legend is evidently a transplanted reminiscence of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Strabo, referring to the latter, calls the site of the perished cities Μοασάδα*, a name somewhat similar to the present Arabic appellation, if we allow for the defective pronunciation of a Greek.

The whole of the wády between the Nagb Ghárib and Jebel Maderah, being the route by which hostile tribes from the east invade the 'Azázimeh, is marked by stone heaps, each of which commemorates some incident of Arab warfare; they either indicate the spot where a horse was slain or a combatant fell, or else they are breastworks thrown up as a shelter from which to shoot at the invaders. The most frequent and imposing of the cairns are said to belong to the horses. The immediate neighbourhood of the

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* Strabo XVI. cap. ii. 44.

Rujúm Ahmadí is covered with them, and undoubtedly some great conflict did take place here, perhaps before the Arab times. We were enabled to “take a rise” out of the ‘Azázimeh who had troubled us so at ‘Abdeh, by giving out that we intended going to Jebel Maderah, though we had really no intention of ascending the hill. Immediately on hearing of our supposed plan, they posted off to defend the ascent, and, as Selím our guide told us, were waiting for us on the top. Our informant offered to go on before and make peace, and was so disgusted when he found that we did not even want to go up, and that there was no *bakhshísh* to be got from us, that he turned back and left us to find our way to camp as best we could by ourselves. The ‘Azázimeh were waiting at Jebel Maderah fondly expecting us, and reckoning on making a scene and acquiring some spoil, while we were meanwhile comfortably jogging on our way. Near our camp in Wády Umm Tarfá were some pleasant pools of rain-water, in which we enjoyed a bathe before dinner, a luxury to which we had long been strangers.

Our journey the next day lay through another extremely ugly and uninteresting piece of country; we passed over the top of the plateau of the ‘Azázimeh mountains, black rough ground, nearly destitute of animal life, producing very little vegetation, and that only in the wádies which intersect it. The plateau is not level, but, as might be expected, is covered with low mountains, little better, however, than inequalities of the ground on a gigantic scale.

We began the day with a disturbance; Selím, the 'Azzámí guide whom we had brought with us, turned out to be a perfect brute beast, and since the affair of Jebel Maderah seemed much inclined to show his teeth. His temper was not improved by my bantering him before we set out, and when we were fairly under weigh he became sullen and morose. At this old Sheikh Hamzeh flew into a violent rage, told him to be off, and was going to beat him with a stick which he had in his hand, when the scoundrel drew his sword, and, glaring fiercely and swearing horribly, was proceeding to execute his threat of demolishing the poor old sheikh, had we not interfered, and with some difficulty made peace.

At last we got off, and wandered through the dull featureless hills, amidst a thick desert haze, which did not add to the beauty of the scene, until we came to Wády Hanjúrat el Gattár, a broad valley which flows down into Wády Maderah. The sides of this wády are steep and precipitous, from two hundred to three hundred feet high; but, as both banks are exactly of the same height, and perfectly straight on the top, the valley looks like a huge ditch. The bottom is paved with smooth blocks of limestone, and contains a few shrubs and pools of rain-water at long distances apart. Before striking the path, which runs alongside the valley, we stopped at the head of one of its little tributaries, to look at three *bedan* (ibexes) which were perched, provokingly just out of gunshot, upon a neighbouring height, gazing with astonishment at such unwonted intruders upon their solitude. Near the same spot was a little heap of stones, with the mark of the Haweitát tribe upon it, probably another record of some Arab fray. A little further on we came across a sort of oven, which Selím called Zarb el Bedan, telling us it was used to cook or store the flesh of any ibex the Bedawín might shoot. At the head of Wády Hanjúrah, which begins very suddenly and precipitously, are a few *retem* bushes and a fine *seyál* tree. Here a road turns off by Mirzebeh and 'Ain el Weibeh to the 'Arabah, but we preferred keeping straight through the 'Azázimeh country, uninteresting as it is, and accordingly struck off to the east, until we again came to Wády Umm Tarfá, near the debouchment of which we had camped the night before. At the watershed of this valley we were shown more cairns, both in the bed and on a hill close by, which marked the place from which some invading horsemen had been shot, and where man and beast fell. On the eastern side at this point comes in a small tributary valley called El Guleib.

Resuming our walk over the rolling surface of the plateau, we presently reached a pass, or rather series of three, called Nagb Ibn Már, very steep and rugged, and one thousand feet above the sea-level. Descending by this, we found ourselves on a broad open space, which might almost be called a plain, from which several large valleys, the principal ones being called Wády Ṛámán and Wády Abu Taraimeh, flow down into the Arabah. The elevation of the mountain near the Nagb Ibn Már is about 2000 ft., about the same as that of Jebel 'Araif, which last, however, is considerably higher than Jebel Magràh. The mountain plateau gradually lowers, until it falls away in a series of precipitous steps into the 'Arabah on the east, and towards Jebel 'Araif to the south, where the 'Azázimeh mountains terminate, and again rises until it forms a second step at Jebel el 'Ejmeh, the southern limit of the Tíh. Here our guide became once more unmanageable, quarrelling with one of our men, 'Own, and drawing his sword, and again we had to repress him. He was very surly for the rest of the day, and when the sheikh offered him a piece of bread he threw it at his would-be entertainer's head, and went off grumbling, to "find some friends to give him a supper, as he wouldn't eat with any of us." Our men were now very apprehensive of molestation from the Arabs of the neighbourhood, and a strict watch was kept throughout the night. Soon after we had arrived at this spot a little girl turned up at our camp, on her way to 'Abdeh, having come by herself from a place called Hesmeh, six days' journey beyond 'Akabah; she had been without bread or water, and had only eaten a few herbs to support herself by the way.

Crossing the wády in which we had encamped, and over a small watershed, we turned into Wády Gateifeh, a broad open valley, with rather finer scenery than we had hitherto met in the 'Azázimeh country. Here and there a little sandstone begins to appear amidst the limestone, and is sufficient to account for the improvement in the outlines of the landscape. From this we turned into Wády Rámán, some distance up which on the left we came upon a pool of rain-water. Presently, passing over a *nagb* about 180ft. high, we found ourselves within a few miles of the edge of the 'Azázimeh mountains, and could see the 'Arabah beyond.

In the hills to the north was a ruined castle, with a road beside it, called Cala'at Umm Guseir, probably a station on the old Roman road to Petra; there is no other fort intervening between this and El 'Abdeh, nor indeed would any be needed. Except in the case of one or two slight deviations, we had kept for the whole way on a broad caravan track, which had the appearance of not having been used for a great length of time; it is rather damaged in places, but there is still a good road right through the mountains, and our guide affirmed that it was the only one. The Rev. E. Wilton in his "Negeb or the South Country," a book to which I have already referred, and of which I cannot speak too highly, has the following passage; "I am much disposed to think, therefore, that the Roman route between Elusa and Ailah took a S. E. direction across Wády Murreh and among the mountains of the Azâzimât, somewhat in the manner indicated in Zimmerman's map; entering the 'Arabah opposite Petra, or a little to the south of it." When we remember that the work in question was composed by one who had never visited the country, and that this conclusion was arrived at solely by an impartial use of the imperfect information afforded by previous travellers, the coincidence of his theory with the actual facts which our own experience has brought to light, is, to say the least, remarkable, and speaks volumes for the logical acumen of the writer. The number of references and intelligent suggestions contained in Mr Wilton's work proved an invaluable assistance to us in directing our attention to the chief points of interest in the investigation of this part of the country.

This road must not be confounded with the route from ʻAkabah to Jerusalem, laid down in the Peutinger tables, which skirted the western edge of the mountain plateau*. The distance between ʻAkabah and Lussán is precisely that of Haila from Lysa as there recorded; but, not being able to speak from personal knowledge of this piece of country, I will not pretend to identify the first two stations, Diana and Rasa. Our own route, however, from Contellet Garaiyeh to the ruins in Lussán, was, as may be seen from the map, within a mile or so of the distance between Gypsaria and Lysa; and our

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* The distances given in the Peutinger tables are as follows,

	ROMAN MILES	ENGLISH MILES.
From Haila (Ela or 'Akabah) to Diana	16	14⅓
Thence to Rasa	16	14⅓
" Gypsaria	16	14⅓
" Lysa	28	26⅓
" Eboda (Oboda)	48	44
" Elysa (Elusa)	24	22
" Jerusalem	71	65

discovery at the first-mentioned place of the remains of an ancient fort, renders its identity with the third station on the list more than probable. From Lussán to El ‘Abdeh, from thence to Khalasah, and from that place to Jerusalem, the distances accord absolutely and exactly with those of the ensuing stations as given in the Peutinger tables. The identity of Lysa, Eboda and Elusa with Lussán, ‘Abdeh and Khalasah is thus conclusively proved both by the coincidence of distances and names, and the course of the old Roman Road is therefore determined. El ‘Abdeh was perhaps one of the most important stations on this route, for here the roads from Gaza and Hebron on the one hand, and from Petra and ‘Akabah on the other, meet in one common focus. Dr Robinson, not content with wrongly applying the name ‘Abdeh to El ‘Aujeh, with which it has no connection whatever, asserts that "Eboda is no where mentioned among the episcopal cities." In a manuscript, however, existing in the Library of the Patriarchate at Jerusalem and dated A.D. 534, ‘Abdeh is described, together with Lussán, as appertaining to the Arch-episcopate of Gaza*.

Selím, our ‘Azzámí guide, having left us, we could not at first find our way, but, after looking about for some time, we struck a road which comes direct from the fort above mentioned, and following that we emerged presently into the Wády el Jeráfeh. Here we began to search for water, as we had been on short commons the previous night, but we did not succeed in finding any until we reached Wády Ghamr, three hours after leaving camp, and even then it was only obtained by digging out some pits, or *themáïl*, which had been filled up by the *seil*. As there was no water to be procured farther on in the 'Arabah, we were compelled to encamp at this spot. Wády Ghamr is a broad valley, containing an immense grove of *tárfah* trees; the verdure contrasting with the red colour of the sandstone, which here begins to shew itself more plainly, was a pleasant relief to the eye after so long a sojourn in limestone districts.

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* ‘Η Γάζα, τὸ σύνορον αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ βορείου ὁ μέγας χείμαῤῥος ὁ ἀναμεταξὺ ’Ασκάλωνος καὶ Γάζης· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ νοτίου ἕως τοῦ χειμάῤῥου τῶν δένδρων. ἔχει ἔτι καὶ δύο κάστρα τὸ ’Ασὸν ἢ Λυσὰν καὶ τὴν ’Αβίδαν· καὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἕτερα δύο, τὴν Χαλασὰν καὶ τὴν Χωλούς. (See also Appendix D.)

Here again we found the previous maps considerably at fault; Wády Ghamr is described as a smaller wády, taking its rise in the 'Azázimeh mountains, and flowing into the 'Arabah from the west; while Wády Jeráfeh is set down as a larger watercourse, flowing from Jebel el 'Ejmeh, and meeting the waters of Wády Ghamr at the south-east corner of the Magráh mountains. The real fact, however, is, that Wády Ghamr takes its rise to the south-east of Jebel 'Araif, flows round the base of the lower plateau, into which we had descended from the Nagb Ibn Már, and receives the waters of Jeráfeh from the north. The whole appearance of this mountain district is desolate in the extreme, and, although we found sufficient water in many parts of our route to indicate that the country is not altogether without natural advantages, the 'Azázimeh who inhabit it are some of the poorest and most degraded of the Arab tribes. We did not complete the exploration of their territory without experiencing considerable opposition and annoyance, but, owing to the light baggage with which we travelled, and the unpretending appearance of our *cortége,* we were enabled to overcome the difficulties, and to escape without any serious mishaps. We were not sorry to leave so inhospitable a region, for it certainly is one of the dreariest and most uninteresting which it is possible to conceive.

I have already given the reasons for identifying the tract of country in the north-east corner of the Tíh with the Negeb or South Country of Scripture; and, before dismissing this part of my subject, I will examine a few of the more precise topographical notices contained in the Bible. Besides the term Negeb as applied generally to the whole district, we find it joined with other words which indicate certain geographical or ethnological subdivisions. The principal of these are the Negeb of the Cherethites, the Negeb of the Kenites, the Negeb of Judah, the Negeb of Caleb, the Negeb of Arad, and the Negeb of Jerahmeel. In 1 Samuel, xxx. 14, the Negeb of the Cherethites is spoken of, in conjunction with the Negeb of Caleb, as one of the places upon which David made a raid, and both are described in verse 16 of the same chapter as lying in the country of the Philistines, that is to say, in the direction of Gaza. But, from Joshua, xxi. 11, 12, we learn that the territory assigned to Caleb was in the hill-country of Judah, and consisted of "the fields of the city (Hebron) and the villages thereof."

The locality is more precisely determined by the fact that Caleb's descendant, Nabal, "dwelt at Maon, and had his possessions at Carmel." (1 Sam. xxv. 2, 3.) Again "Maon, Carmel, Ziph and Jutta," are mentioned among "the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah, towards the coast of Edom southwards," literally "in the Negeb," (Josh. xv. 55.) We may deduce from this that the Negeb of Caleb was a subdivision of, if not identical with, the Negeb of Judah. Judges i. 16 tells us that the Kenite Jethro went up "into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the South (i.e the Negeb) of Arad;" we may therefore unhesitatingly place the Negeb of the Kenites in the neighbourhood of Tell 'Arád. In Jebel Rakhmeh we have a reminiscence of Jerahmeel, the name of the remaining portion of the Negeb. To the English reader the derivation may seem a forced one, but the words are really closely connected in their etymology; the same radical letters occur in both, and the initial Je (*yod*) is dropped, precisely as in the case of Jericho, which has become in the modern Arabic Ríhá. These several portions of the Negeb may be easily traced out upon the map, and the Bible divisions accord with the present physical aspect of the country. The divisions of the South Country then will be as follows:

1. In the low country north and west of Beersheba, we can recognise the Negeb of the Cherethites. 2. In the hill-country south of Hebron, the outposts of the hills of Judah, we can identify the

Negeb of Judah; and the ruined sites of Tell Zíf, Ma'ín and Kurmul indicate exactly the locality of the Negeb of Caleb. 3. Tell 'Arád and its adjacent plains form the Negeb of the Kenites, which extended, probably, to the south-western end of the Dead Sea. 4. The next portion of the plateau, that bounded on the north by Wády Rakhmeh, and on the south by Wádies El Abyadh, Marreh, and Maderah, represents the Negeb of Jerahmeel. With this boundary the fertile district of the Negeb ends*. The mountains of the 'Azázimeh, the southernmost portion of the plateau, were, as we have seen, not included in the South Country; for it was north of this that the Israelites were driven back. Of the place which this district occupies in Scriptural topography I shall have occasion to speak further on, when discussing consecutively the question of the Forty Years' Wanderings.

No less accurate and intelligible are the Bible accounts of the people who dwelt in the South Country. In 1 Samuel, xxvii. 8, we are told that the Amalekites were "of old the inhabitants of the land as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt," that is, unquestionably the country under consideration. Numbers xiv. 25 and 45, speaks of both the Amalekites and the Canaanites, in the former verse as occupying the valleys, and in the latter as dwelling in the hills. This apparent contradiction in terms really assists us in identifying the locality, which is further described in Genesis xiv. 7, as "The Country of the Amalekites and Amorites." The word here rendered "country" is in the original *sádeh,* and would be almost exactly rendered by "plateau." The division of territory between tribes living in the hills and others occupying the fertile region at the lower level on to which the seils and wádies debouch, precisely accords with our own experience of the present inhabitants, and the words of the Bible might be as aptly applied to the 'Azázimeh, Terabín, and Teyáhah now as they were to the Amalekites, Canaanites, and Amorites in the time of the Patriarchs and Judges.

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* The divisions of the South Country are admirably discussed by Wilton in "The Negeb." Of his suggestions and references I have made great use, although taking a slightly different view of the identification of the several portions.

Another and older tribe, inhabiting Jebel Magráh, was the Avim. We learn from Deuteronomy ii. 23, that "the Avims dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah," or Gaza, and the mention of the Avim in Joshua xiii. 3, 4, as the southernmost of the tribes inhabiting the Canaanitish territory, that is, the Negeb, enables us to identify their country with the Mountains of the 'Azázimeh. The word Hazerim moreover signifies "pastoral enclosures,"—the *dowárs* and stone circles which we found in such numbers in the vicinity, and which I have elsewhere fully described.

CHAPTER VIII.

EDOM.

The 'Arabah. Physical Geography of Edom; its boundaries, geology fertility, and inhabitants. Modern Rechabites. Nagb er Rubá'í. Ascent of Mount Hor; Aaron's tomb; alarm given by the Arabs; a critical situation. "Taking a rise" out of the Fellahín. The Liyátheneh encampment. Arrangements for the journey to Moab. Petra; description of the monuments; the Sík; the Khazneh, its origin and purport; the amphitheatre; tombs with inscriptions; the western cliffs; 'Aireh; Pharaoh's gardens. Snowed up with the Liyátheneh.

Leaving Wády Ghamr by some low hills just above our camp, we descended into the 'Arabah, which we crossed in a diagonal line, keeping a little to the south-east. After a fatiguing walk over *himádah*, or gravel covered with flint, we reached the base of the Mountains of Edom, having met with nothing of interest by the way except one, to us, new tree, called the *ghadha*.

Edom is a narrow slip of mountainous country, extending northward from 'Akabah as far as Wády Kerek the southern boundary of Moab. It is bounded on the west by the Wády el ‘Arabah, and on the east by the Darb el Hajj, the pilgrim route from Damascus, which skirts the desert in the north-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula. This district is divided into two parts. The northern portion is called El Jebál, and answers to the Gebal of the Hebrew and the Gebalene of the ancient Romans; it includes the villages of Tufíleh, Buserah, and Shobek. The southern portion is called Es Sherah, the most important places in which are Wády Músa, Ma‘ăn and ‘Akabah; it corresponds to the Mount Seir of the Bible, and the celebrated, and now comparatively well known, ruins in Wády Músa are those of the ancient capital of Edom, called in Hebrew Sela, or the Rock (2 Kings xiv. 7), and in Latin by the equivalent name Petra.

The mountains of Edom consist mainly of a range of porphyritic rock, which forms the backbone of the country; above this rises a mass of sandstone assuming the richest colouring and the most fantastic forms, and on either side of these two formations are limestone hills. Those on the east are the outposts of the great plateau of the Arabian desert, and in many cases attain the highest elevation in the whole mountain group; those on the west are much lower, being in fact only the low hills that form the eastern bank of the ‘Arabah, which valley skirts the limestone plateau of Et Tíh and the Negeb. The country is extremely fertile, and presents a favourable contrast to the sterile region on the opposite side of the ‘Arabah. Goodly streams flow through the valleys, which are filled with trees and flowers; while on the uplands to the east rich pasture-lands and cornfields may every where be seen. With a peaceful and industrious population it might become one of the wealthiest, as it certainly is one of the most picturesque countries in the world; and, were there now as great facilities for transport as there were in ancient times, the power and commercial importance of Edom might be once more revived. But the traffic of Arabia and India is now diverted from the Desert to the Ocean, neglect and wanton violence have destroyed the noble works which made the wilderness an easy path, and, to crown all, a corrupt and supine government has allowed anarchy and brigandage to infest every approach. Thus the gifts of nature are lavished in vain, and what little corn the half-savage Fellahín can produce serves scarcely any other purpose than to excite the cupidity of the Bedawín who share the country with them, and to keep alive perpetual wars and feuds. How truly are the prophetic denunciations herein fulfilled;—the inheritance of Esau, which was "the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven from above" (Gen. xxvii. 39), has become "a desolation" and a curse.

El Jebál is occupied by Fellahín whose present sheikh, 'Abd er Rahmán el 'Awar (or the one-eyed), is perhaps as unmitigated a scoundrel as the East can boast of; a great portion of the country is, however, in the hands of the Hejáyah Bedawín. In Es Sherah the principal Arabs are the Haweitát and the 'Ammarín; the former are a powerful but very lawless tribe, one clan of which, the 'Alawín, are entrusted by the Egyptian Government with the conduct of pilgrims or travellers to ʻAkabah and Wády Músa. The ʻAmmarín are a poor and degraded tribe; they have not even the Bedawí virtue of keeping their plighted word, and I should advise the traveller to steer as clear of them as possible, unless he be accompanied by a Turkish military guard—in which case they will probably and wisely steer clear of *him*. The immediate neighbourhood of Wády Músa is in the hands of Fellahín called the Liyátheneh; they are of so decided a Jewish type as to have led Dr Wilson and others to imagine them to be descendants of those Simeonites who settled in Edom. This view is erroneous, as it is clear that their immigration into the country dates after the Mohammedan conquests. They are the sons of Leith*, a lineal descendant of Kaȧb, and a branch of the Kheibarí Jews, who resided near Mecca and played so important a part in the early history of Islám. The Kheibarí are still found in large numbers about Mecca and Medina, and are much dreaded by the Hajj caravans, as they invariably rob and murder any unarmed stragglers; by Dr Wolff and other learned travellers they have been identified with the Rechabites mentioned in Jeremiah xxxv. 6, 7: "They said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever. Neither shall ye build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers." This precept, which is in effect that they should assimilate their mode of life to that of the Arabs amongst whom they dwelt, they have obeyed to the present day, for they drink no wine and dwell in tents. Although professing themselves to be Mohammedans, they are laxer in their religious discipline than even the Bedawín themselves, whose observances are really more Sabæan than Muslim. The Liyátheneh retain not only the distinctive physiognomy, but many of the customs, of the Jews, such as wearing the Pharisaic love-locks.

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* The word *leith* in Arabic signifies a lion, and this would, if any thing, point to the tribe of Judah, whose symbol was a lion, as that from which they sprung.

We had been informed that the Arab tribes around Petra were then at war, and that the place was entirely closed to travellers, one party who had come down to ʻAkabah to make the attempt having been compelled to return without success. Trusting, however, to the small and unpretending nature of our cortége, and to our experience of Arab character and manners, we kept to our proposed route, and reached the mountains of Edom without molestation. We entered them by a small winding wády in the edge of the limestone, and proceeding up this for about four miles ascended a pass some 1400ft. above our last camp, and pitched our tents on the plateau at the top, immediately to the north-west of Mount Hor, or, as it is called by the natives, Jebel Hárún. The peak is a fine jagged one, and towers conspicuously above the neighbouring heights; it is surmounted by a little white building, covering the reputed tomb of Aaron.

Early the next morning we ascended a second pass called the Nagb er Rubáʿí, and then turned off in the direction of the summit of Mount Hor in order to "steal a march" on the Arabs of the place, who, at the best of times, are very exorbitant in their demands on travellers.

The mountain rises to an elevation of more than 4000 ft. above the sea-level, and is reached by a fatiguing climb of about three-quarters of an hour from the top of the Nagb er Rubáʿí. At first our path lay over a long white limestone block to the east of the mountain; but for the rest of the way we had to scramble up the rugged red sandstone of which the summit is composed. Thus far we had got on well and still escaped unobserved; but just as we reached the base of the highest peak, a boy, who was tending goats, saw us, and, going off to a high ridge, began shrieking out wildly to alarm the Arabs in the wády. His cry was soon answered by a loud report in the valley below, and in a few minutes the rocks around echoed with the firing of alarm guns, and an ominous din was heard coming from the direction of Petra itself. The first thing which met our eyes when we stepped upon the small plateau immediately below the summit was a heap of ruins, and, beside the rock, a huge black caldron, used for boiling the sheep which are there sacrificed to "the Prophet Aaron." A flight of steps cut out in the rock leads up a steep precipice to the tomb itself, and about half-way up these steps is a large cistern or chamber covered in with arches, over which the staircase is built. The door of the tomb, which is an ordinary Muslim *welí,* was locked at the time, but we contrived to look inside, and saw that the roof was decorated with ostrich shells and similar ornaments. Over the door is an inscription, stating that the building was restored by Es Shim'ání, the son of Mohammed Calaón, Sultan of Egypt, by his father's orders, in the year 739 of the Hijrah.

In the meanwhile, however, the noise in the valley grew louder than ever, and we judged it time to descend; for to have been surprised on the sacred mountain would inevitably have led to serious consequences. So, having stayed long enough to boil the thermometer, read the aneroids, and enable Drake to make a sketch of the magnificent mountain landscape which the summit commands, we came down the steep sides of Mount Hor rather quicker than ever I descended a mountain, either before or since. We luckily came across our own camels as soon as we reached the valley, but immediately afterwards we were set upon by a very unprepossessing gang of half-naked savages, who turned out to be Arabs of the Maázeh tribe. They accused us of having "visited the prophet" by stealth, swore that they would confiscate one of our camels, and otherwise made themselves objectionable; but our Jehalín camel-drivers, especially the one who had accompanied us in our somewhat perilous attempt, swore that we had not done so, and by judiciously bestowing a few piastres we got rid of them. We then made for our camping-place, and were approaching the solitary pillar called, Zibb Far‘ún, when a furious shout was heard in the valley, and about twenty or thirty armed men were seen rushing down upon us. We were quite prepared for a scene and a row; but as we were dressed in native costume, and very dirty, they were thrown off their guard by our appearance, met us with friendly demonstrations, and rushed off shouting as before, declaring that the enemy were upon them. It was soon apparent what had happened—our friends were the Liyátheneh, or Fellahín of Petra, and having heard the alarm given by the boy and replied to by firing from the Arabs below, they imagined that some hostile tribe had attacked the place. While they were absent on their bootless errand, we walked on as far as the side wády, in which the amphitheatre is situated, and there encamped. We had hardly got settled, however, before the Liyátheneh returned, having learnt the real state of the case, and began at first to make a terrible disturbance and swear that we had "visited Aaron;" but after some discussion we succeeded in pacifying them; and one fellow, the brother of the sheikh, was actually civil. They brought us a goat, and killed it upon the spot, the whole party staying to partake of the meat, and to "watch over our tent at night," a little piece of civility which cost us nearly three dollars.

The colouring and outlines of the rocks in Wády Músa are certainly very fine, but the general effect of the tints is not so magnificent as we had been led to expect. The stone is all of a deep chocolate colour, but, where the surface has been removed by more recent cutting or excavation, it is really magnificent—red, white, and yellow streaks coming one upon another, and giving in the sunlight the effect of gorgeous watered silk. The excavations themselves are very curious, and many which we saw could never have been tombs, but must always have been used as dwellings; we had not, however, leisure to do more than just glance at them then, as our time was fully occupied in keeping a sharp look-out after our new companions.

Having been disturbed throughout the greater part of the night by the noise and disputing of the Arabs and Fellahín, we were aroused before daylight by the arrival of the mules which were to take us up to the Liyátheneh encampment; so, after a hurried breakfast of dry bread and tea, we started off. Passing by the amphitheatre, we entered the Sík, a narrow passage about two miles long, which winds through the mountain between high and precipitous cliffs, and which in beauty of colour and grandeur of form exceeds even the glowing descriptions which former travellers have given of it. Emerging from this, we came out into a more open country amongst limestone hills. Here several tombs are excavated in the white limestone, and amongst them also are a few detached monolithic monuments, resembling that known as the tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem, but without the conical roof which distinguishes the latter. Passing the village of Eljí, we ascended the hills for an hour and a half, and at last reached the camp of the Liyátheneh, which consisted of about a hundred tents arranged in a square, two of the sides having a double row, with the doors facing each other. As we neared the place, we were met by a party of men from the camp, Silmán the sheikh of the tribe amongst them, who at once began quarrelling with the men who had brought mules for us, and claiming a share in the hire. Our tent was pitched in the centre of the square, and we were immediately surrounded by the most scoundrelly gang conceivable, who kept on incessantly begging for everything they could think of, and it was as much as we could do to keep them from picking and stealing. In the mean time a great and hideous row was going on between old Hamzeh and the sheikhs of the Fellahín about the amount of black-mail which we were to pay. The terms ultimately fixed upon, though very exorbitant, we were glad to accept, if only to rid ourselves for a few hours of their irritating noise and squabbles. Towards the end of the afternoon we took a walk to the eastern end of the camp, where, at the head of a valley, is a well, and the remains of a ruined village, called respectively ‘Ain, and Khirbet D’haă̌h. In the evening some ‘Ammarín Arabs who had been sent for to take us eastward appeared, and, to add to the pleasures of the day, we found that neither they nor the Liyátheneh could escort us to the Darb el Hajj, as the Arabs were fighting there, and the roads were infested by marauding tribes hostile to those living in the country.

Here a question of some difficulty presented itself, with regard to the expedition to Moab, which it had been arranged that I should undertake. The most obvious and cheapest route was to return to Jerusalem and enter the country by the territory, and under the escort of the 'Adwán. To take the eastern course involved passing through a country already embroiled in warfare, and amongst tribes whose lawlessness and rapacity are proverbial even amongst the Bedáwín themselves. Several considerations, however, determined us to take the latter course. The 'Adwán and S'khúr Arabs had been employed in the affair of the Dhíbán stone, and, being "posted up" in desert news, we knew that they had not only searched in vain in their own country, but had been unsuccessful in their attempts to discover several "written stones" said to be in the possession of the Hamaideh and Beni Hamídeh, the tribes in whose territory the "Moabite stone" was found, and whose opposition caused the lamentable destruction of the celebrated monument of Mesha. We resolved therefore to brave the risks and enter into negotiations with the last-mentioned tribes, unprejudiced by the company of strangers, whom we knew that they regarded with no small suspicion and distrust. Accordingly we made arrangements with the 'Ammarín that they should conduct us to Shíhán in Moab for the sum of twenty napoleons, and consign us to the Beni Hamídeh Arabs there.

In the night we were visited by a severe storm of snow and sleet, and as our camp was 4700ft. above the sea-level we found it bitterly cold. Notwithstanding this, however, we took with us the next morning four most villainous-looking Fellahín, and descended into the valley to visit the ruins. Coming down by the village of Eljí, which consists only of a few rude stone houses, we reached the bed of the wády, and passing the ruins of ‘Aireh on the opposite (western) hill, across a running stream and over some cornfields, came to the commencement of the rock-hewn tombs and dwellings of Petra. The formation before reaching the Sík is mostly limestone, and there is consequently less beauty of colouring upon the rocks than in Wády Músa itself, but the quaint excavations even here are well worth a visit. The principal of these are, first, a temple with Corinthian columns, and two side aisles, situated on the hill-side beneath ‘Aireh; second, a tomb with four pyramids on the top, which has been photographed by Mr Bergheim, of Jerusalem; thirdly, three tombs cut out of the solid rock, and, like those mentioned above, somewhat resembling the tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem. The scene presented to the view on entering the Sík is romantic and beautiful in the extreme: a narrow passage runs between high perpendicular cliffs of the richest hue; this is spanned by an arch built high up on the rock, and now quite out of reach, which anciently carried an aqueduct from the heights above. Beneath your feet trickles a clear sparkling brook, and the whole entrance is filled with oleanders, while creepers hang in luxuriant green festoons from the walls. The more you advance, the narrower and grander the gorge becomes; about half-way down it, on the left-hand side, are some little square cuttings in the wall, evidently intended for tablets, and some niches, which have been described as having contained statues, but which are both too small, and are filled up with carving—in one some foliage could still be traced. They are dedicatory altars of the same pattern as those which exist at Baniás and other places in Palestine, and beneath them we found five or six imperfect Greek inscriptions.

Near the end of the Sík, at a point where it takes a sharp turn, you come suddenly upon the Khazneh, which in beauty of form and colouring surpasses all the other tombs and temples. The façade is of a deep but delicate rose-colour, and that of the uncut rock around it varies from every shade of red to chocolate. In front is an open space filled with flowering oleanders and covered with a carpet of soft green grass, which add greatly to the beauty of the scene. At the corner of the courtyard is a small ravine, up which a flight of steps once led. Many and conflicting theories have been proposed with regard to the origin and purport of this temple; by studying the details carefully upon the spot, I have been able to arrive at a solution of the difficulty which will I think satisfy the antiquarian. The façade of the temple consists of a portico originally of six columns, but one of them has now broken away. The four middle pillars support a pediment; on the apex of this is an ornament, which has been variously described, but which a more careful inspection proved to be a lyre. Above the whole is a very curious piece of ornamentation: a second pediment the width of the whole façade is supported by two pilasters at either end; the pediment has then been cut through on each side of the centre, and the block so left has been fashioned into a cylindrical ornament surmounted by an urn. The cylinder and the recesses thus formed have been then furnished with pilasters and dressed to correspond with the front portions. This pediment which is thus divided into three portions presents nine faces of rock, each having a pilaster on either side, and on these are sculptured female figures with graceful flowing drapery. The curious device was in all probability adopted to admit of the symmetrical arrangement of *nine* figures, those, I take it, of the nine muses; the lyre, the emblem of Apollo, being also introduced lends colour to the supposition that it was dedicated to those divinities. The mysterious excavation, then, is nothing but the *Musæum* of Petra—not what the Turks would call an "Antiquity-House," but the Philharmonic institution of the place.

Another turn brings us into the amphitheatre; the view from this spot is perhaps one of the grandest in the place, as it takes in nearly all the excavated parts of the valley. The boxes or *loculi* above the seats of the theatre have really nothing to do with its plan or construction; the fact is that they must have existed before the theatre was cut out, and their faces must have been cut away in order to hollow out the auditorium to the required dimensions. There is no possible means now left of getting up to them, as all the front parts have been destroyed. On your right as you emerge from the Sík, and immediately opposite to the theatre, are some tombs with very perfect and elegantly constructed fronts. The first of these contains a curious arrangement of graves or *loculi;* they are cut in the floor, not lying in any one direction, but placed all ways, so as to make the most of the room. On the wall to the left of the entrance are some rude representations of sepulchral monuments, and beneath these, two Nabathæan inscriptions. Similar representations of tombs occur in several parts of the valley; they are in shape something between an obelisk and a pyramid, and apparently indicate the ordinary pattern of sepulchral monuments in use amongst the Nabathæans. A little beyond the last-mentioned tomb are some arched terraces of brick adjoining excavations below, and immediately above these, though having no other connexion with them, is a very fine excavated temple, with an elaborately carved front. The inside originally contained six *loculi,* or recesses, which have since been made into three, and rounded at the top so as to form apses, the place having been subsequently turned into a Christian Church. A Greek inscription in red paint records the fact of its consecration, but the latter part, containing the date, is unfortunately illegible. There are many tombs and dwellings which are now inaccessible, but traces of staircases cut in the rock, and now broken away, may be seen everywhere. The pleasure of our sight-seeing was marred by the uncomfortable state of the weather, which was very wet and cold, and by the constant importunities of the Fellahín who accompanied us. They did not then, it is true, attempt any real or pretended violence, but the petty annoyances which they constantly inflicted upon us were almost as hard to endure. Amidst snow and biting cold wind we returned to our elevated camp, and, a heavy fall continuing throughout the night, the mountain paths soon became impassable, and we found ourselves unable to leave the spot. With six inches of snow on the ground, several feet of the same constantly drifting into our little tent, and no materials whatever for making a fire, our position was not an enviable one. However, we put on all our clothes—three shirts and several coats and waistcoats apiece, and passed the time in bed, making ourselves as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. Our only consolation was that our Rechabite neighbours suffered more than we did, for they had only one shirt apiece, and not, indeed, always that. I am afraid we were very uncharitable, for, as a chorus of groans and chattering of teeth went on around us, we felt an intense satisfaction in the thought that they were too much engrossed with their own misery to worry us, and we posted up our journals and smoked our pipes quite merrily. We should have been seriously inconvenienced for want of food had we not induced one of the least ruffianly of the Liyátheneh, by the hope of reward, to supply us with something to eat. He managed to collect a few sticks, and lighting a fire inside his tent (which he shared with two wives, several children, a donkey and a flock of goats), made us a little bread from time to time and gave us some milk. On one occasion he actually killed a small kid, and, having eaten the greater portion himself, brought us some pieces of meat, expatiating all the time upon his own generosity, and impressing upon us that our subsequent gratitude ought to take a very substantial form. The desert explorer should never be above asking for or accepting a dinner. As soon as the weather allowed us, we again visited the valley, and spent some time in copying the inscriptions in the Sík and its neighbourhood, after which we examined the ravines in the western cliffs, but found nothing of interest, except that there the ornament over the doors was of a different shape, and more like a Romanesque arch. The oleanders and tarfah-trees which grow in these ravines make the scene extremely beautiful and romantic. At the northern turn in the wády, as you leave the western acclivities, are three large rock-cut tombs with ornamented façades; the first and largest of them is called Magháret en Nasára, or the Christian's Cave, and was, at the time of our entry, occupied by several families of the Fellahín. Every tomb has its owner, who dwells there with his wives and family during the cold or wet weather. We returned to camp by a ravine in the eastern hills, a little above the Khirbet en Nasára. Here Irby and Mangles found "the Sinaitic Inscription;" it is on a large temple, with a fine front, having four attached columns, and partly built up with masonry. Unfortunately, we did not at the time remember the description given of it by those travellers, and passed it by, as our time was limited for the day, and we did not care to climb upon the somewhat rugged platform on which the temple stands. This temple was described to us as large enough to hold fifteen families. On the opposite side of the ravine is a little winding cleft in the rock, at the entrance to which were some small dedicatory altars, but, as it was at the time more than knee-deep in water, we had to leave it unexplored. In a few minutes after this we reached the ruins of the village of ‘Aireh. A smaller ravine here branches off to the left, with an arch spanning it, and carrying an aqueduct from the heights; it is called Gantarat bint Far‘ún, "Pharaoh's Daughter's Arch," and the ascent to the east is named Besatín Far‘ún, or Pharaoh's Gardens. There are several ruined houses and a fort at the top of the left-hand ravine; the latter occupies a most commanding position, as it overlooks the entire valley, and defends the only part not protected by some difficult mountain pass. The path leading to the top of the ravine was very rugged and difficult, and we had frequently to creep between narrow crevices of rocks; a well-made aqueduct runs along it, the whole way. On one of the rocks was scratched a rude representation of the front of a tomb, having instead of a pediment, the staircase ornament, which is one of the architectural peculiarities of Petra. The next morning we were again kept in camp by the cold; in the course of the day one of the Fellahín brought us a white macintosh stolen from some former traveller, and offered it for sale for twelve piastres, but we did not like to produce so much money for it before such a set of villains. The noise by which we were continually worried was this day increased by a divorce cause which was being heard in the *Shigg* or public reception tent, before the Sheikh.

Our Jehalín camel-drivers were not allowed to remain in Wády Músa a single day, and even could they have stopped, they would have been unable to accompany us any farther, on account of their blood-feud with the Arabs to the east of the ‘Arabah.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM PETRA TO SHÍHÁN.

Packing up. Annoyances from the Fellahín. Wády Beidhá. The 'Ammarín break faith with us. El Beidhá and El Bárid; rock-hewn temples and dwellings. Fulfilment of prophecy. Nagb Nemelah. More quarrels with the 'Ammarín; we are stopped on the high-road. Wády Fiddán. The Arabah again. Night-march through the Ghor. Ghor es Sáfi encampment of the Ghawárineh. A wounded robber. Gasr el Basháríyeh. Seil Garáhí. The Dead Sea. The Waters of Nimrim. Abu K'taineh; rock-hewn hermitage. Ghor el Mezári. El Lisán; ruins; El 'Aríl. Bathe in the Dead Sea. Visit from Sheikh Ahmed ibn Taríf.

Packing up was rather a difficult process, with the Fellahín abusing each other and hustling us the whole time; every minute some of our valuables were snatched up and carried off by one or other of the crowd, and to recover them required no little exercise of patience and of limb. At last, however, we did get away without any serious loss, and left Petra accompanied by every male member of the Liyátheneh encampment. A more noisy or ruffianly escort than ours it would be difficult to imagine; each man fancied that his neighbour had got something from us, and that he himself was defrauded by our being allowed to leave before he had obtained his share. The discussions to which this state of feeling gave rise were not altogether reassuring. At one time it seemed that they would come to blows amongst themselves for the possession of the plunder which each thought the other had already secreted; at another, they were unanimously agreed that it was foolish to let so much property slip through their hands, and a general attack upon our goods and chattels appeared imminent. But by playing off against one another the Liyátheneh chief and the ʽAmmarín sheikh who accompanied us, and by preserving an unconcerned demeanour, which they could not understand, and attributed to our relying upon some resources which they knew nothing of, we managed to hold our own, and escaped unmolested from their territory. We ascended the hill by the fort of ʽAireh, from which we obtained a splendid view of the whole of Wády Músa, and followed a road called El Bareidhí which crosses over the mountains to the north-east. Here we were told of two ruined cities, Dibdibeh and Bannoureh, on the east. In about three hours we reached a flat open space, with a few large isolated crags scattered here and there over the surface, and found ourselves at a cave, consisting of a large square chamber and a vestibule, in which we encamped. The front of the cave had been long since destroyed, but a portion of an ornamented lintel was lying on the rocky platform before the doorway; on either side of the vestibule was a smaller chamber, the doors of which had also once been surmounted by stone lintels. The principal door had a window on the left-hand side. In this cave our beds were strewn, but, as the floor was some feet thick with goats' droppings, the fleas and odours were anything but pleasant. The locality was called Wády Beidhá; it had been once the site of an ancient city, but now only a few stones remained to mark the spot.

The Liyátheneh having deposited our luggage, asked for a breakfast and *bakhshísh,* but, as we had now left their domain, and the 'Ammarín were beginning to collect, we defied them, and flatly refused to give them a penny, at which they went off in great disgust. Two ruffians, however, stayed behind; one of these was named Ibrahím el Hasanát, a smooth-spoken scoundrel, and the most dangerous in the gang; the same man some time before had fired upon a party of travellers and dangerously wounded their dragoman. This fellow so frightened the 'Ammarín, by refusing to go, and threatening to shoot some one, that at the instance of the Arabs we consented to give him a trifle to get rid of him, and he took a pathetic farewell of us, during which time, however, we took the necessary precaution of standing to our guns.

The Fellahín having left, Selámeh Ibn 'Awwád, the sheikh of the 'Ammarín, was at first all smiles and fair promises, and began to recount to us his own troubles, telling us that Wády Músa belonged to him and to his ancestors, but that the Liyátheneh a few years back had taken it from the ʻAmmarín by force of arms, and were confirmed in their possession of it, conjointly with the Haweitát, by the Turkish officials, on the recommendation of Rafáʻí Bey, who was then at ʻAkabah. Presently, while we were at dinner, we heard a great disturbance, and found that he had changed his tone, and, in spite of his solemn promises to take us to Shíhán for twenty napoleons, was demanding exorbitant sums for *rafk*, or black-mail. Old Hamzeh came in, looking more mad than usual, and after beating his breast, and making an insane attempt to tear his clothes, sat down on my bed, and suddenly plucking two handfuls of hair out of his beard, presented one to each of us. We got out of him that the rascal Selámeh had declared that he would leave us where we were, for the Liyátheneh to rob and perhaps murder us, and with the certainty of starvation, unless we paid another £30 for *rafk*. This sum was ultimately reduced to eleven napoleons, which we had to pay with the best grace we could.

The next day, the camels not having yet arrived, we went out with a couple of men to visit the ruins of El Beidhá and El Bárid. A little way to the south-east of our camp was a large cave, some 15ft. up in the cliff. On examining it closely, it turned out to be an immense reservoir, with three compartments cut in the solid rock, containing at the time a good supply of water; a flight of steps on the left hand led down to the pool. The ceiling and walls were plastered, the cornice being ornamented with a line of red and black paint, and a fringe formed by impressions of the human hand in the same colours. A channel is cut in the face of the cliff above; and in front of the reservoir itself (the lower part of which projects into a little platform of rock) was once a wall, for the stream to shoot against and so run into the chamber. When there is rain the Arabs hang a large bush against the face of the rock, which serves the same purpose of conducting the water into the reservoir and preventing it from dashing over and wasting as it would otherwise do. A little farther on is a pretty rock-hewn temple, having a façade composed of two columns and a pediment surmounted by a small urn, after the pattern of those in Wády Músa. From the appearance of the flight of steps leading up to it, and the diminutive size of the interior chamber, it would seem to have been left unfinished. Immediately after this point you enter a narrow ravine, or *sîk,* which has been once closed by a door, the sockets of the gates being still visible. After a few minutes the ravine widens out, and you enter a street of dwellings, temples, and cisterns, all cut out of the rock,—not so elaborate in their details as those in Wády Músa, and wanting the beautiful colouring of the latter, but still very pretty, and apparently of older date. At every point are staircases made in the small clefts, and sometimes in the face of the rock, most of them leading to platforms on "high places" designed perhaps for sacrificial purposes. Some of the temples have plaster on the interior walls, and this is rudely painted to represent stones. One has a very elaborately painted ceiling, containing a pretty device of flowers, festoons of grape-vines and convolvuli, with Cupids playing about on the branches and some of them holding drawn bows. The execution is by no means contemptible, and is apparently Roman. As you emerge from the Sík, there is a temple on the left with an elegant façade of four columns. The whole ravine is full of oleanders, and carpeted with the softest grass: it terminates abruptly in a narrow cleft, at the

TEMPLE AT EL BÁRID.

top of which is a temple, and the façade of this has fallen down and blocked up the way. The city, or village, is called El Bárid, and was undoubtedly Horite in its origin (as the excavations are obviously in this case *all* dwellings), but has been occupied by later peoples. This is evident from the frescoes above mentioned, and from the fact that on the rocks on either side we found several Nabathæan inscriptions. The Arabs have a tradition that the former inhabitants of the city found a door in the rock leading to a rich and fertile subterranean land, with which they were so pleased that they entered it, made their dwellings therein, and closed the door behind them for ever.

Who that passes through this goodly but desolate land, and regards the vestiges of perished grandeur in these rock-hewn cities, can recall without emotion the solemn words of prophecy : "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof." (Jeremiah xlix. 16, 17.)

At the end of the day, when we had returned to our cave, a fresh detachment of 'Ammarín Arabs came up, and another diabolical row ensued, ending in their refusing to take us on unless we paid an additional four napoleons. At last, however, we got off, and, leaving the scattered rocks of El Beidhá, entered a fine Sík, called Abu 'Alda, and leading to a valley of the same name. Here again the rocks assumed the gorgeous colouring of Petra, being in fact a continuation of the same range; while the rugged and overhanging cliffs, and the thick forests of *tarfah* and oleander, made the scenery magnificent. At the end of Wády Abu 'Alda is the basaltic chain which we had noticed on first entering the mountains of Edom. Crossing a spur of this we came into Wády Sumrá, ascended this to the Nagb Eshkárt Emsa'ad, and, having come down again for a short distance, mounted to the Nagb Nemelah, from which we once more caught a glimpse of the 'Arabah and of the distant mountains of the 'Azázimeh. On the first pass we were joined by some Arabs, who began to demand from Selámeh a share in the plunder, and it ended in his making fresh requisitions upon us at night. When we abused old Hamzeh for his incapacity, and for promising money in our name, the old fool whined out that he could not help himself, and, undoing his girdle, prepared to strip himself and hand us his shirt by way of showing how helpless he was; half our trouble and expense was due to his allowing the Arabs to worry and frighten him, and Sheikh though he was, we found ourselves better hands than he at a bargain with the Bedawín. Before starting on the following morning, they demanded from him two and a-half napoleons, which he had promised that we should pay, and, presenting their guns at him, threatened to murder him then and there unless he complied with their request.

Scarcely was breakfast over before we had another row, Selámeh demanding that we should pay for his *delúleh*, that is, the camel on which he himself rode, and we were powerless to resist, as he took the other beasts away and refused to go on. Hamzeh, with his usual stupidity, again stepped in as I was discussing the point, and spoilt my chance of beating him down. Our course lay along the eastern slopes of the 'Arabah, but, as the wádies and *seils* there are very featureless, and a thick desert haze hid the mountains on either side, there was not much to interest us. A hot wind was also blowing, which did not add to the pleasure of our walk. Towards sunset we reached the Samrat Fiddán, a long, low mountain ridge on the eastern slopes of the 'Arabah, where we intended to encamp. Just before entering it we espied a company of Arabs armed and mounted on camels, and preparations were at once made in case of an attack by the strangers. Our own camels were drawn aside beneath the shelter of a rock; each of the party examined his arms and prepared to use them if necessary, while Selámeh and one of the men, throwing off their *'abbas* and *kéfíyehs*, rushed forward to meet the strangers and find out whether their intention was peace or war. There is something rather pleasant in the uncertainty and excitement of such a moment, though we were not sorry to see both parties embrace, and to find that the new-comers were members of the same tribe as our own escort; they were Suleimán, another of the ‘Ammarín sheikhs, and some men who had been to Kerek for corn. It turned out, though, that we had little to congratulate ourselves upon after all, for Suleimán immediately began a row with Selámeh about the right of passage, and, seizing one of the camels, declared that none of us should pass until he had been paid a black-mail. The two sheikhs got into a frightful rage, called each other by all the polite epithets which *very* vulgar Arabic could afford, and were soon in the arms of their mutual friends and retainers, rushing feebly towards each other with drawn swords. As yet we had not been personally asked for anything, and rather enjoyed the exhibition. Presently things were to all appearance settled, and Suleimán came to beg pardon of us for having made a disturbance; we found that some soldiers had been, or were, at Shíhán, and, on learning that our destination was the same place, the Arabs had thought it safer to conclude the matter peaceably. Farj, a brother of Suleimán, who had come with us from Beidhá, was still obstinate, but he was sent home, and Suleimán took his place. In the morning we found that Suleimán who was a loquacious and plausible scoundrel, had renewed his claim, and that Selámeh had given him a napoleon and lent two more to Hamzeh to be given to him on our account! We utterly repudiated his right to do anything of the sort, and swore that, come what might, we would not pay another farthing.

Crossing from the *tarfah* grove in which our tent had been pitched, we came into Wády Fiddán itself, a pretty valley with a deep swift stream of running water in it. We then turned off by some rocks of conglomerate; one of these forms a natural arch or bridge across the path, and is held in reverence by the Arabs, who visit it and hang up offerings in front of it, regarding it as a *welí*, or saint's tomb. It is called Umm ed Duhúr, but they had no tradition to account for their observance, which, they say, arises merely from ancestral custom. A dreary walk over a piece of flat table-land brought us to Wády el Weibeh, by which we descended into the ʻArabah. Another bare piece of desert and a large *kethîb*, or sand-hill, had next to be crossed, and, passing successively Wádies Salamán and Seil Dhalal on the right, we reached Wády Tʻláh at about one o'clock in the day. Here was a stream of water, a large ruined *birkeh* (or tank), and the foundations of a fort, with the remains of a small village attached thereto. It was evidently another station on the old Roman road from Gaza, and probably a branch turning off to Arabia. The Hajj route at the present day goes down the wády which we had just before crossed, viz., Wády Seil Dhalal. We rested by the water for two hours, after which we set off again, intending if possible to reach the encampment of the Ghawárineh Arabs by night, and so avoid the fatigue of a walk across the Ghor in the heat of the day. The landscape was by no means a tempting one, as the haze still continued, and revealed only a piece of white broken desert, the dreariest we had yet seen. Nor were our spirits cheered by seeing one of our camels drop its load, and both our boxes roll over in the sand. Old Hamzeh surpassed himself in idiocy at this misadventure, for he had a notion that Drake's tin box was full of gold; he slipped down off his beast, and rushed shoeless over the sharp stones to the scene of the accident, when, seizing a great stone, he heaved it feebly in the direction of a passing Arab, and relieved his mind by mingled curses and prayers. Luckily nothing of any importance was lost or broken.

Descending some low cliffs—probably the Maaleh (or ascent of) Acrabbim mentioned in Joshua xv. 3—we came about sunset into the Ghor itself. It is a flat piece of ground, with a soft sandy soil and filled with vegetation, the most noticeable trees being the *'osher* and the *rak*. The *'osher*, or apple of Sodom, is a tropical plant with a fleshy leaf, which, as well as the stem, on being broken yields a plentiful supply of milk said to possess blistering qualities; the juice of the 'osher-tree is also supposed to possess wonderful properties in assisting the ladies who drink it to increase the households of their lords. The *rak* is a plant with small thorns, bearing a tiny fruit which grows in bunches, and in shape and taste somewhat resembles our currants. Here and there copious streams of swift running water come down from the mountains, fertilising the whole of the district; and we passed in succession Seil Ed

Debbeh (which was at the time dry), Khanaizíreh, Faifeh (two branches), and Ghor es Sáfí, all of them rivers of considerable size.

By the last named we encamped in the midst of the *dowár* of the Ghawárineh Arabs; it was nearly midnight before we reached it, and, as we had walked more than twelve hours that day, we were rather fatigued. Our moonlight march through the almost tropical woods of the Ghor was a thing to be remembered in after years; we were none of us allowed to speak above our breath, lest some prowling enemies should be encamped or waiting near, and this circumstance added greatly to the romance of the whole affair. We should have been glad, however, had the restraint been removed, for near one of the streams we saw a wild pig with two little ones, enjoying an evening meal within gunshot of us. In the neighbourhood of Seil Faifeh we espied a camel with a riding-saddle on, and an *'abba* thrown across its back; the owner was evidently, like ourselves, travelling by night, but alone, and had wisely decamped on seeing such a very questionable-looking party as our own, and had left his beast to its fate. Our men were in high glee, and promptly proceeded to confiscate the stray camel and lead it on with our own animals, Selámeh merely remarking that they had got a windfall. Not wishing to be a party to such a piece of barefaced robbery, and perhaps to draw down upon ourselves the vengeance of the Arabs to whom the camel belonged, we insisted on their leaving it where it was, which, after some demur, they consented to do. The whole journey from ʻAbdeh to this point had been a very exciting one. The Arab tribes around us were at war, murders were of daily occurrence, and often, when camping for the night, we could not even light our fire after sunset, lest the blaze should reveal our resting-place and bring down upon us some band of marauders.

The Ghawárineh were encamped in the midst of a picturesque *hísh*, or park, at the foot of the mountains of El Jebál. All around were cultivated fields of grain and indigo watered by pleasant sparkling rivulets, and occasional patches of pasture-land on which numbers of sheep and oxen were grazing. Such a scene of plenty and industry was an agreeable change after our long sojourn in the desert, where man has only laboured to destroy. The peculiar situation of the Ghor, far below the sea-level and shut in by lofty mountain walls, makes the climate exceptionally hot even for these latitudes, and both the vegetation and the fauna are decidedly tropical in character. Visiting it as we did, in the early spring, we experienced no inconvenient amount of heat, but when, as sometimes happened even then, a hot south wind sweeps across it from the ʻArabah, the minute dusty particles of which the soil is composed are whirled aloft in such dense clouds as to produce an almost suffocating effect. The Ghawárineh are a peaceful industrious tribe, and, as they had not very recently suffered from the raids of their Bedawín neighbours, were living in comparative comfort and security.

They treated us with great hospitality, and liberally abused the ʻAmmarín for their infamous conduct towards us. Finding ourselves in such good quarters, we determined to stay a few days, to rest and examine the neighbourhood, which is one of great interest; and, as we found that the Ghawárineh were willing to take us on to Shíhán, we determined upon dismissing our late treacherous guides. They tried all they could to propitiate us, fearing that we might call them to account hereafter, and promised us safe conduct for the future if we would retain them; but we could not trust them, and sent them about their business. Subsequently, on reaching Jerusalem we made a formal complaint against them, and H. E. Ráshid Pásha most obligingly declared that he would hang both Selámeh and Suleimán,—a mark of attention which we had ourselves promised them. But, although we had nothing more to fear at their hands, an incident happened shortly after our arrival to remind us that we had not yet left the regions of brigandage and war; one morning, an Arab of the Saʻidíyeh tribe ran limping up, and sought protection in our camp. He had a severe bullet-wound in his foot, and had been stripped of everything except his *thob*, or loose under-shirt. On being asked the cause of his disasters, he calmly stated that he had that morning gone with four others to steal some sheep from a village in the neighbouring hills; they had been surprised by the mountaineers, stripped of their clothes and arms, and carried off prisoners. A solemn council was held, at which it was resolved that they should all be shot; the sentence was immediately carried out upon the other four, but our friend had contrived to take to his heels, outstrip his pursuers, and escape with a slight wound. He appeared remarkably unconcerned for one who had just taken part in so exciting a scene, and seemed neither affected at the death of his companions, nor resentful against his would-be executioners.

Immediately behind our camp was a fine ruined fort, called Gasr el Basháríyeh, "The Evangelists' Castle." The gateway of this, constructed with a pointed arch, is still in a good state of preservation, and is scribbled over with Arab tribe-marks; on the plaster which covers the inside walls are traces of an Arabic inscription done in various colours. Most of the walls are of mud, but two are of hewn stone and support a kind of aqueduct or stone trough, part of the water-power arrangement of the mills which the Arabs say once existed there. The Gasr el Basháríyeh is the same ruin which Dr Tristram calls *Tawahîn-es-Sukkar*, "Sugar mills," and identifies with the "ancient city of that name" mentioned by Burckhardt*. Near it is a burial ground dedicated to Sheikh 'Eisá; the graves are, for the most part, made on the tops of the ruined walls and the corpses merely covered with a few stones and bushes.

On the hills above are the ruins of a small town or village, and of another building, probably a chapel. In Wády Siddíyeh, a little to the south-east of the fort, we found a broad rushing stream called Seil Garáhí; rushes, tamarisks and beautifully flowering oleanders lined the banks, and numbers of small fishes and freshwater crabs were disporting themselves in the river-bed. Here Drake brought down a large kite, of which our Ghawárineh friends at once made an impromptu meal. Their *cuisine* was simple: they lighted a fire upon the spot, and, throwing the unsavoury bird into it, waited until the feathers were consumed, when they extracted it, tore it to pieces with their fingers, and picked the bones with the satisfaction of epicures. Our own fare was simple enough in the desert, but I draw the line at kite cooked whole.

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* *Land of Israel*, p. 340.

The next day we left the Ghor es Sáfí, accompanied by a motley crowd of donkeys, Arabs, horses, and mules. The sky was overcast with clouds, and a dense haze obscuring the mountains made the landscape as dreary and monotonous as it could be. In an aspect such as this, the Dead Sea seemed more than ever to deserve its name; not a sign of life was there, not even any motion, save a dull mechanical surging of the waters. The barren shore was covered with a white incrustation of salt, relieved only by occasional patches of black rotting mud, or by stagnant pools of brine. All along the dismal beach large quantities of drift-wood were thickly strewn, and amongst this might be detected the blackened trunks of palms. The tree has disappeared from Palestine for centuries, but here its body is embalmed, the only record of that grove which in olden times gave to Jericho the title of the City of Palm-trees. (Deut. xxxiv. 3.)

But on a sunny day the Dead Sea presents a very different appearance. The waters, which are remarkably transparent, sparkle with a bright azure hue, and the mountains on either side assume the most gorgeous tints. Nor does it wear the same aspect of utter sterility; for, although the immediate vicinity of the lake is barren enough, the Ghor or deep depression at the northern and southern extremities teems with life and vegetation; and even where the cliffs rise sheer up from the water's edge, streams of fresh water dash down the ravines, and bring the verdure with them almost to the Salt Sea's brink. Even on the barest parts of the beach, immense numbers of storks may be observed, and these also help to give life and animation to the scene.

Keeping along by the desert shore, we reached the stream and ruins of N'meirah, where there is a *welí*, the tomb of Sheikh Saláh, which is held in great estimation by the Ghawárineh Arabs. N'meirah is probably identical with "the waters of Nimrim," whose desolation was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah in his half-indignant, half-sorrowing lament over "the burden of Moab." (Isaiah xv. 6.)

Passing next by a ruined tower called by the natives El Meraisid, we presently arrived at the Ghor es Saád, where we found an encampment of the M'jelliát Arabs from Kerek. This is the tribe from which Lieut. Lynch experienced so much annoyance and opposition during his survey of the Dead Sea, and against whose threats and machinations the American explorer so gallantly defended himself. The occupants of the tents sallied forth *en masse* to welcome us, and suggested the payment on our part of a toll, under the euphemistic title of *rafk*, or "escort," but our Ghawárineh attendants promptly repressed them, and our own remarks upon the subject were far from complimentary.

A little past the tower we came upon a ruined reservoir, named Birket Abu K'taineh, after a Muslim saint whose hermitage, we were told, we should find in the low hills to the east. Crossing these, we descended by a rugged crumbling path into a deep ravine, and in the opposite cliff beheld the object of which we were in search. It was a small rock-cut chamber, circular in shape, containing two niches, a store-closet, and a window, all hewn in the soft chalk, or marl, of which the hills are composed. The walls are covered with modern Arabic *graffiti* and many representations of the human hand; the last-mentioned sign is commonly used in Palestine as a charm against the evil eye. These are probably the work of Arab pilgrims who visit the place on their road to Mecca. The Ghawárineh Arabs look upon it as a very holy place, make pilgrimages to the spot, and sacrifice there to Abu K'taineh; they say that the Jinns excavated the dwelling by supernatural means at the saint's command. A little farther on are some stone heaps placed by the sea shore; these, the Arabs of the country told us, are used as altars, upon which to sacrifice to Nebí Saláh, when the presence of hostile tribes makes it impossible for them to approach the *welí* itself. They are called Rujúm El Mowájehát, "Facing cairns," and face the tomb of Nebí Saláh, which is plainly visible from the spot.

After a walk of about eighteen miles, we reached the Ghor El Mezár'i and pitched our tents in the midst of a large encampment of the Arabs of the place. No sooner had we settled ourselves down than the Ghawárineh swarmed round us, pressing and crowding upon us with rabid curiosity, and so completely hemming us in, that Ibrahím, our Abyssinian lad, in endeavouring to get near us, fell head over heels in the midst of them all. They apologised for their curiosity by saying that they had never seen any one like us before; which was probably true. We were dressed in Arab fashion; but, except in places where such concealment was absolutely necessary, we made no secret of our European appurtenances; thus, although our highly civilised frying-pan betrayed the Frank, our dirty faces and scanty stores were sufficiently Arab to render us objects of considerable speculation.

Early the next morning we started off, accompanied by some of the Mezár'i Ghawárineh, to visit El Lisán, "The Tongue," the broad promontory extending northwards from the south-east corner of the Dead Sea, which had never before been thoroughly examined. It is a plateau of soft chalk, or marl, encrusted with salt and containing large quantities of sulphur in a very pure form. The surface is for the most part perfectly flat, but a few little plateaux rise up here and there upon it. The strip of land which connects it with the shore is lower than the rest, and the impression conveyed to our minds was that this isthmus had been under water, and that the main body of the promontory had formed an island at some period when the level of the sea was higher than it is at present. That such was once the case we were able to ascertain on subsequently visiting the coast further to the north from Moab. Here the rocks come down precipitously almost to the water's edge, and former water-lines can be plainly detected upon the lower portion of the cliffs. The south-eastern edge, that adjoining the isthmus, is cut up into deep wádies, which, however, run only for a short distance, and then stop abruptly, as the soil is too absorbent to admit of a long flow of water. It was by one of these valleys, called El Meráïkh, that we entered the Lisán, and, proceeding for a short distance down it, we came upon the ruins of a tower built of solid masonry, and a small reservoir. The tower stood upon a hill, the side of which had been strengthened in a very ingenious manner by facing it with masonry composed of brick-shaped stones, in order to counteract the crumbly nature of the soil. On the site were some broken columns, of considerable architectural pretensions, and many pieces of glass and pottery lying on the ash-heap contiguous to the ruins, but we could find nothing to indicate the date. Making a circuit of the promontory, we came to a depression called 'Aríl, situated at the south end of the bay, which separates the mainland from the eastern edge of the Lisán; in this hollow, water collects during the rainy season, and it consequently shows some signs of fertility, containing a few shrubs and a fine spreading tree.

From this point we descended to the water's edge in order to enjoy a bathe. The water is so exceedingly salt and pungent as to cause intense pain to the eyes if it is allowed to enter them, but is so buoyant that one finds it impossible to sink. We floated with equal ease upon our backs or breasts, sat upon the water as one would upon a feather-bed, and, indeed, placed ourselves in any attitude we pleased without any fear of sinking. The only disagreeable part of the performance was that, if we attempted to swim in the ordinary manner, our legs would fly up out of the water with a jerk that told most unpleasantly upon the small of the back. A long sojourn in "the tents of Shem" had made for us many strange and pertinacious acquaintances whose name I must not breathe to civilised ears; from head to foot we were covered with marks of their attention, and when, on coming out of the water, we began to crystallize, each puncture was filled with hardening salt—but enough:

> Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet.

On returning to camp, we found Ahmed Ibn Taríf, chief of the Beni Hamídeh Arabs, waiting to receive us. Ahmed was a short, stout little fellow, with a good-humoured face, and an air of jaunty independence about him that quite prepossessed us in his favour.

He stated that the Mejelliát from Kerek were already informed of the arrival of strangers in the country, and were in high spirits at the prospect of extorting some money from us. Under these circumstances, he advised us to come on at once to his camp in the mountains of Moab, and accept of his generous and disinterested hospitality. Now the best way to avoid extortion in the desert is to lead some powerful sheikh to believe that he is taking you in, and that, although generally hard to deal with, your greatest ambition is to be plucked by him; he will then defend you gallantly against any attempts at imposition from others, and you can defer settling with him until you have the opportunity of escaping from his clutches into those of someone else equally designing and equally credulous. These considerations, and the fact that he was the very person whom we had come to see, induced us to accept his offer, so, although rather tired with our trip to the Lisán, we packed up our traps, and departed.

CHAPTER X.

MOAB.

Description of the country: Kir-Haraseth; meaning of the term. Nagb Jerrah. Camp of the Beni Hamídeh. Baal Peor. Search for "Moabite stones." "Lot's wife." Site of the cities of the plain. Shíhân. El Yehúdíyeh. Solomon's tomb. A council of war. Arab hospitality. Journey through Moab. Wâdy Mojib, the Arnon. Dibon; the Moabite stone; its history and contents. Umm Rasâs; ruined tower; Arab legend. Wâdy Wâleh. Ancient sites. Mount Nebo. Antiquarian prospects in Moab. The ford of the Jordan. The Promised Land at last.

Leaving the Ghor, which towards this point is very swampy, we passed a ruined fort, called Tell 'Abd er Rahím, and, crossing the Seil Hadítheh, a broad stream of water that might almost be called a river, began the ascent of the Nagb Jerrah into the hills of Moab.

Moab is a country about fifty miles long by twenty broad, and includes the table-land on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, as well as that part of the Ghor which lies on the eastern bank of the Jordan opposite Jericho. The plains are well watered and very productive, resembling in character the southern Ghor which I have already described. The uplands consist of a rolling plateau about 3200 ft. above the sea-level, the western edge being cut up into deep valleys, and descending by a series of sloping hills, at angles of forty-five and fifty degrees, into the Dead Sea. These uplands are naturally divided into two districts by the great chasm of Wády Mojib, the Arnon of Scripture; of these the northern portion is called by the modern Arabs El Belga*, and extends as far north as the mountain of Gilead; while the southern part is known as El Kerek, and reaches southward to the wády of that name. Kerek, though now little better than a collection of hovels, stands upon the site of the ancient capital of Moab. In the Old Testament it is called Kir-Haraseth, -Haresh, or -Heres; the first part of the name appears to signify a "city," but the meaning of the suffix has considerably puzzled the commentators. When at Dhíbán (the ancient Dibon) I unexpectedly met with an explanation of this term; as an instance of the manner in which apparently trivial local idioms and customs often illustrate the topographical allusions in the Bible, the incident was very curious. Asking one of the Bedawín where the "Moabite stone" was found, he informed me that it was "between the *hárithein*," that is, the two *hāriths*. Now in Arabic this word would mean "a ploughman;" and, on my demanding a further explanation, he pointed to the two hills upon which the village stands, and between them lay the fragments of the broken monument of Mesha. Nearly every town in Moab is built upon a similar eminence, which, I found, was invariably called by the Arabs a *Hárith*. At the time, I merely noted it down as a philological peculiarity, and it was not until, some time afterwards, I came across the word Kir-Haresh in the Hebrew Bible, that I perceived the importance of the discovery, and noticed that the words Haresh and Hárith are absolutely identical in orthography and derivation. I did not myself visit Kerek, but from the description given by Mr Grove*, that "it is built upon the top of a steep hill surrounded on all sides by a deep and narrow valley,"—being, in fact, situated on the most decided hill of the kind in Moab—it is apparent that the term would apply with more force to Kerek than to any other site in the country. Thus in an apparently insignificant idiom we have a confirmation of the accuracy of the Bible in topographical details, an additional reason for identifying the modern with the ancient site, and the interesting discovery of a local Moabitish word handed down from the time of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, to the present day.

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* The word is usually (and properly) written Bel*k*a, but the Bedawín change the hard *k* into *g*, and I have throughout this volume followed the local pronunciation.

The uplands are very fertile and productive, and, although the soil is badly tended by the few and scattered Arab tribes who inhabit it, large tracts of pasture-land and extensive cornfields meet the eye at every turn. Ruined villages and towns, broken walls that once enclosed gardens and vineyards, remains of ancient roads—everything in Moab tells of the immense wealth and population which that country must have once enjoyed.

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* Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. MOAB.

The road by which we ascended into the Hills of Moab, though rather steep, is a broad and good one all the way, and has been built up in various places with masonry and rocks. All along it are huge cairns, of the origin of which the Arabs knew nothing; a few smaller stoneheaps, two or three miles further on, marked the place where some Arabs of the ʻ Azázimeh on a predatory incursion had been shot by our new friends the Beni Hamídeh. It was not until past dark that we reached our destination, the encampment of Sheikh ʻAleyán, of whose hospitality it had been arranged we should partake that night. The sheikh himself, a palsied old man, received us very civilly, and gave us some milk and a dish of rice cooked with butter for our supper, presenting us also with a handful of tobacco—the first we had ever *received* from an Arab in our lives.

As we were packing up in the morning, a gazelle suddenly rushed into the camp, and appeared excessively bewildered at finding himself in such undesirable company; with one bound he passed the line of tents, followed by a dog and half the able-bodied men of the tribe in hot pursuit. One of them came near the animal, and knocked it over by throwing his *dabbús*, or club, in the use of which the Arabs are very skilful; and, having slaughtered it, the hunters brought the carcase in triumph to the camp.

It was a very fine specimen, and we bought the horns for a few charges of powder. Continuing our journey, we ascended to the top of the Nagb Jerrah, where were some pools of water, constructed with rude masonry, and called Hafáïr Jerrah. There was still another toilsome climb before us, but after marching for some time up steep sloping hills, and passing a spring called ‘Ain el Joheir, we came to the encampment of Sheikh Ahmed, which was situated on a flat knoll, just beneath the Rás en Weimeh. The scenery of Moab reminded us somewhat of Palestine, though the hills are on a much larger scale, and *butmah* trees take the place of the olives of Judæa. As soon as we arrived, we were entertained with coffee, and sat chatting with the Arabs, in the *shigg*, until the tent was pitched. When we had fairly settled down, Ahmed brought us two capital dishes, one of rice and butter, and the other of millet and butter, for lunch, and shortly before sunset he provided us with a smoking hot dish of boiled lamb, fat and fleshy, resting in a mess of rice and butter; this, with some hot bread and a dish of boiled and buttered corn, made us a dinner by no means contemptible.

The object of our coming was immediately divined by the Arabs, for we found that the affair at Dhíbán had afflicted them with a positive mania for “written stones.” Our host offered to conduct us at once to Shíhán, that we might see, and, if it pleased us, buy a stone which he declared he had found and concealed there, and which the Arabs employed by "consuls at Jerusalem" had been unable to obtain. He had, however, a keen eye to profit in the transaction, and declared that we must pay a sum of money down before seeing the stone, because, as he frankly told us, it might be worth nothing, and then we should only give him a trifle for his trouble, which would not answer his purpose. He, moreover, added the following reassuring remark: "If you had come down here twelve months ago, and offered me a pound or two, you might have taken all the stones you chose, the Dhíbán one included: but you have now taught us the worth of written stones, and the Arabs are alive to their importance at last." Several times during our subsequent stay in the country, we were told by men who had actually assisted in breaking the Dhíbán stone (and who might therefore be supposed to know what it was like) that they knew of and had secreted other monuments, which they declared to be the very counterpart of the celebrated monument of Mesha. We could not leave such statements unsifted, and the same routine had to be observed time after time—an extravagant *bakhshísh*, a long walk or ride, occasionally entailing a night passed under the shelter of a rock, with no other food than a piece of dry bread and a skin of water—always however with the same result, to wit, the discovery of a stone covered with old tribe marks, natural veins, or, at the best, a fragmentary Nabathæan inscription.

While with the Ghawárineh, we had heard strange rumours that "a statue" called "Lot's wife" existed on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, but none of them had ever seen it or could give us a satisfactory description of it. Making cautious enquiries amongst the Beni Hamídeh, we found that the statement was correct, and, after some little trouble, guides were procured who offered to conduct us to the spot. This brought to our notice a curious and unexpected vestige of old local tradition. One of the men employed to conduct us on our proposed excursion was called Fáúr; the name is not Mohammedan, not even Arabic, but is the literal modern representative of the name of the old Moabitish idol, Baal Peor.

The way was said to be too steep and difficult for horses, and we were advised to encumber ourselves with as little luggage as possible; so we took with us a small bag of flour and a water-skin, and prepared to camp out on the mountains. Early in the morning, after our arrival in Moab, we started off, and, proceeding down a narrow winding valley with a steep gradient, came to a stream of water, a *birkeh*, or tank, and the ruins of a fort situated upon the hill-side and built of very solid masonry. Higher up in the rocks on the right-hand bank of the valley was a large cave, in which the Arabs are said to have taken refuge when Ibrahím Pasha came to these parts with his soldiery to subdue the lawless Bedawín tribes. Towards midday we reached an encampment of Arabs, who provided us with a lunch of hot bread broken up and soaked in butter, and, after paying a trifle for our entertainment, we again started on our journey.

Pursuing a difficult path along the sides of the steep hills for about three miles, we emerged upon a plateau, at an elevation of 2100ft. above the Dead Sea. In the middle of this there rises up a conical hill of bluish clay, called Telail Abu Fulús (the coin-containing mound), and towards this we directed our steps, as the Arabs declared that our road lay that way. On reaching it, however, it was apparent that they had missed the path, and we found ourselves obliged to climb down an almost perpendicular cliff of broken sandstone, as best we could. The landscape spread out before us, as we descended this cliff, was exquisitely beautiful, and the aërial effects softer and more delicate than I had ever seen. The sandstone of which the cliff itself is composed exhibits some very gorgeous colours; brilliant streaks of red, purple, and violet appearing on a dull ochre ground, and producing a very pleasing effect. The outlines of the rock are also picturesque, and the water-worn appearance of the lower plateaux indicates clearly that more than one subsidence has taken place and changed the level of the lake. Our path led us to another plateau, about 1000ft. above the Dead Sea, and on the extreme edge of this was the object of which we were in search—Bint* Sheikh Lot, or "Lot's wife." It is a tall isolated needle of rock, which does really bear a curious resemblance to an Arab woman with a child upon her shoulders. The

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* *Bint* properly means "daughter," but in Moab it is almost invariably used for "wife." Can this strange idiom, and its still stranger application in the present case, contain any lingering reminiscence of the melancholy story told in Gen. xix. 30—38?

Arab legend of Lot's wife differs from the Bible account only in the addition of a few frivolous details. They say that there were seven cities of the plain, and that they were all miraculously overwhelmed by the Dead Sea as a punishment for their crimes. The prophet Lot and his family alone escaped the general destruction; he was divinely warned to take all that he had and flee eastward, a strict injunction being given that they should not look behind them. Lot's wife, who had on previous occasions ridiculed her husband's prophetic office, disobeyed the command, and, turning to gaze upon the scene of the disaster, was changed into this pillar of rock.

Travellers in all ages have discovered a "Lot's wife" in the pillars which atmospheric influences are constantly detaching from the great masses of mineral salt at the southern end of the Dead Sea, but these are all accidental and transient. The rock discovered by us does not fulfil the requirements of the Scriptural story, but there can be no doubt that it is the object which has served to keep alive for so many ages the local tradition of the event.

The sun was just setting as we reached the spot; and the reddening orb sank down behind the western hills, throwing a bridge of sheeny light across the calm surface of the mysterious lake. As we gazed on the strange statue-like outline of the rock—at first brought out into strong relief against the soft yet glowing hues of the surrounding landscape, and then mingled with the deepening shadows, and lost amid the general gloom as night came quickly on—we yielded insensibly to the influence of the wild Arab tale, and could almost believe that we had seen the form of the prophet's wife peering sadly after her perished home in the unknown depths of that accursed sea.

Writers on sacred topography, from Josephus downwards, have unanimously concurred in assuming the southern portion of the Dead Sea to have been the position of the "Vale of Siddim" and the "cities of the plain." Captain Wilson, in an able article upon the site of Ai*, shows this view to be erroneous, and I entirely agree with him in placing the site of Sodom and Gomorrah at the northern extremity of the lake. After conclusively proving the identity of Ai with a hill to the east of Bethel "covered from head to foot with heaps of stones and ruins," the writer proceeds to discuss the position of the mountain mentioned in Genesis xii. 8, where Abraham "builded an altar to the Lord," and upon which, as we are told in the next chapter, he agreed to separate from Lot, leaving the latter to choose which portion of the country he would take to dwell in. "Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar." (Gen. xiii. 10.) This verse, as Captain Wilson points out, evidently implies that Lot was actually looking down upon Sodom and Gomorrah at the time; and if, as is expressly stated in the following verse, he journeyed east, this course would have led him away from the southern end of the Dead Sea.

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* Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly statement, No. 4. The Rev. George Williams had already pointed out the extraordinary coincidence that in Josh. viii. 28., where Joshua is said to have "burnt Ai and made it a *heap* for ever," the word translated "heap" is *tell*, which is not only one of unusual occurrence in the Bible, but is identical with the present name of the site identified with Ai, viz. Et Tell, or "*the* ruined heap."—Paper read before the Church Congress at Dublin, October 2, 1868.

However, as night was fast approaching, we could not stay long to speculate upon these interesting questions. We therefore retraced our steps and, again ascending the cliff, looked out for some convenient spot in which to pass the night. Our beds were easily made--they consisted of clearing away a few of the sharper stones and taking off our boots to serve as pillows—which operation concluded, we sent two of the men to knead some flour at a neighbouring spring, baked a piece of bread in a wood fire and lay down to sleep beneath an overhanging rock. We slept pretty comfortably; and, as soon as it was light, started off again in the direction of our camp. After resting a little while at a stream of water immediately above our halting-place of the night before, we turned off towards the tents of some Arabs on the right-hand hills, and begged a breakfast.

Here we were told of a stone existing in the neighbourhood, the description of which greatly raised our expectations, for the Arabs declared it to be exactly like the Dhíbán stone, but of larger size.

After toiling up a high hill, we found the stone in question on the top of the pass—a large flat boulder, naturally broken, and inscribed with rude figures of *bedan*, &c., exactly resembling those so common in Sinai. It was very disappointing, and there was nothing left for us but to make the best of the matter and our way home. Resisting the hospitality of Fa'úr, our ancient Moabite, whose tents we passed on our way, we reached camp about three o'clock, very tired and footsore. Early the next morning, we mounted horses, and set off, accompanied by Sheikh Ahmed, on a visit to Shíhán. The name, which is identical with the Hebrew Sihon, may contain a reminiscence of that Sihon King of the Amorites who, at the time of the Exodus, reigned in Heshbon, having dispossessed the Moabites from their land, "from Arnon even unto Jabbok." (Numbers xxi. 24.) Passing through a number of fields enclosed by ancient walls, and called Hákúrat Huseiní, we came to a ruined village called Sarfat el Mál, where we had also been told of the existence of a "written stone," but which turned out to be nothing more than a broken boulder of black basalt with natural markings on the surface. The buildings were not unlike those at Dátraiyeh, the arches being of the same pattern, but all composed of black basalt similar to that just spoken of. In one of the wells we found a millstone of the same material, shaped like those discovered at Pompeii. Riding along an old road which ran between two walls, we passed sundry other ruins, with names that recalled those of the Moabite cities mentioned in the Bible, and at last reached Shíhán itself. The ruins are situated on a round hill which rises conspicuously above the surrounding fertile plateau. There is little left of the ancient city of Sihon but a few rude forts and dwellings, and a well, or pit for storing grain. On the crest of the hill there evidently once stood a temple, probably Roman, and some pieces of broken columns lay scattered about. The "written stones" here, of which we had heard so much from the Arabs, turned out to be a rude capital with the ordinary Ionic ornament, and a flat broken slab of white stone covered with Arab tribe-marks. The ruins had been, as in many other cases, turned into a grave-yard by the Arabs; one recent burial was excessively unpleasant to our olfactory nerves, the corpse having been only partly covered by throwing a few stones over it. We noticed, as a peculiarity of the burials here, that two sticks were often placed beside the grave, with a rope stretched between them, and upon this braided locks of hair were hung as offerings. Again disappointed, we turned off to visit El Yehúdiyeh, a black basaltic boulder, about 12ft. long, of which the Arabs have a legend that it is a woman turned into stone for profanely denying the certainty of death. Passing the ruins of Fugú'a, we ascended a hill at the head of Wády M'naikherain, and lunched at the tents of some Arabs on *leben,* or sour milk. After a ride of about eighteen miles we returned to our own tent in the encampment of Ahmed Ibn Taríf.

Not far from us was a ruin about the name of which a considerable difference of opinion existed. Some of the Arabs knew it as Nebí Dáűd and asserted that it contained the veritable tomb of David King of Israel; while others as vehemently declared that it was the last resting-place of his son Solomon, and should be called Suleimán ibn Dáűd. The *welí* occupies a commanding situation on the hills overlooking the Dead Sea, and consists of a square building with a series of chambers built against the interior wall and an open court-yard in the centre. The latter contains a tomb 26 feet long and constructed with square-hewn stones.

At the eastern end were numerous offerings, such as beads, buckles, coins, and the like, placed there by the Arabs, who regard the spot with much veneration. One of the compartments on the south side had evidently been a mosque, as it contained a *mihráb*, or prayer-niche, of the ordinary pattern, and a verse of the Corán was painted upon the plaster of the inner wall, which was moreover ornamented with elaborate arabesque work in fresco. Here again we found numerous offerings, amongst them many of the curious hooked sticks with which the Bedawín drive their camels; these furnished the type for the sceptres carried by the kings of Egypt and Assyria, as represented on the Hieroglyphic and Cuneiform monuments. It is probably the tomb of some pagan, perhaps Moabitish hero, adopted by the Moslems as a *welí.* When we came back we had a hearty meal off a kid which Sheikh Ahmed had given us, and were very glad to get a taste of meat again, having been without for some time.

One morning during our stay with the Beni Hamídeh Arabs two strange Bedawín came to the encampment, and we had the pleasure of listening to a council of war. 'Abd er Rahmán, the one-eyed chief of El Jebál, had treacherously murdered forty men a little while before, and had, moreover, stolen our host's donkey; the latter was in itself enough to form a *casus belli*, and hostilities had, in effect, been carried on for some time between the two tribes. The messengers whom we saw had come to make proposals of peace; Ahmed, with all an Arab's frankness, forgave the murders on the spot—the murdered men were not of his tribe—and the three embraced with every mark of affection and esteem. But presently the question of the donkey was brought forward; Sheikh Ahmed demanded restitution and compensation, and the negotiations were ultimately broken off. When the men had gone he came to our tent and told us that his visitors were some of his own people, who had been bargaining about a sheep. This was in order not to arouse our apprehensions, as the country was in a very unsafe state at the time, but when he found that we had overheard the whole affair, he made no further attempt at concealment. Certainly the Beni Hamídeh were much more quiet and sensible fellows than any other Arabs whom we had seen, and Ahmed's demeanour during this rather important discussion was calm, and free from all violent demonstration.

We also received a visit from Khalíl el M‘jellí, sheikh of the Kerek Arabs. While we were staying in the Ghor es Safí, the Haweitát Arabs had made a raid upon him, and stolen sixteen of his horses and mules; he was, consequently, rather hard up, and was now going the round of his friends to solicit contributions towards supplying his loss; he contemplated bleeding us, but did not succeed. Sheikh M‘sellim, one of the chiefs of the Beni Hamídeh, also invited us to a feed at his tents. Arabs are still as fond as ever of exercising the virtue of hospitality. As they practise it, it is a lucrative speculation. The Bedawí sheikh, knowing that he must not now-a-days expect "to entertain angels unawares," takes especial care to entertain only such as can pay a round sum for the accommodation, or give their host a good dinner in return. The casual and impecunious stranger may, it is true, claim the traditional three days' board and lodging, but he must be content with the scraps "that fall from the rich man's table," and prepared to hear very outspoken hints of the undesirability of his presence.

On the morning of May 1st the wind blew a perfect hurricane, and we found on waking that the Arabs were beginning to move their tents to the other side of the hill, an example which we soon found it convenient to follow. The change was for the better, as we had a clearer camping ground in our new quarters, and a good view of the Dead Sea from the door of our tent.

In the night we were awakened by a great noise and shouting; it seemed that some of the S'khúr Arabs were returning from a raid against the 'Azázimeh and Gadeirát tribes, and had brought with them fifty camels, the produce of their predatory excursion. Our host and his party, hearing that they were passing by his way, turned out, in hopes of catching them and levying a tribute of one or two camels, but failed to overtake them. A Christian trader from Kerek also arrived in the camp and came to pay his respects to us; he was not a prepossessing person, and was going the round of the tribes for the purpose of buying butter. Soon after our arrival in Moab, our stock of ready money came to an end, and we were obliged to send into Jerusalem for a fresh supply. The delay thus caused kept us the guests of Sheikh Ahmed for a longer period than we had intended, but at last, to our delight and his, the messenger arrived with the cash, and we proceeded once more on our travels. Leaving Ahmed's encampment, we made for that of M'sellim, whose invitation we had determined to accept, for we knew that we should learn more about the country, and our chances of success in the object that had brought us there, by listening to the unreserved communication of the Arabs one with another than by any amount of direct enquiry, which they would be certain to regard with suspicion, and answer with prevarication. Arrived at his camp near Shíhán, we sat down for some time in the *shigg*, drinking *leben*, or sour milk, and chatting with the motley throng assembled there.

The Arabs inhabiting the mountains of Moab, although they do cultivate the soil to a slight extent, are essentially a pastoral people; every other consideration is therefore sacrificed to the safety and welfare of their flocks and herds, and the spots selected for their encampments are nearly always the most elevated portions of the plateau, the vicinity of which affords good and extensive pasturage. These are necessarily remote from the streams and water-springs, the small amount of water required for the use of the camp being brought by the women either upon donkeys' backs or their own. Sour or fresh milk is always plentiful and placed at the disposal of the visitor, but often on asking for a drink of water I have found that such a thing has not been seen for days in the encampment. The reception of Sisera by Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite as narrated in Judges iv. 18, 19, might serve as a general description of our own visits to the tents of the Moabite Arabs: "and when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty: and she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink, and covered him." The tents are generally placed upon an eminence, and arranged so as to form three sides of a square—that nearest the precipitous edge of the hill being left open. On arriving at an encampment, the traveller enters from behind, and makes for the sheikh's tent, not dismounting until he reaches the door. This is, in most cases, a necessary precaution, as he is surrounded, the moment he passes the line of tents, by a snarling pack of curs, whose sole object in life appears to be driving back stray cattle and biting strangers' legs. The chief then dives behind the mysterious curtain which screens the various wives of his bosom from the public gaze, and, returning with all his available carpets and extra clothing, extemporises for you a comfortable *divan*. *Leben*, is then brought and coffee ceremoniously prepared, one of the sheikh's relations roasting the berries and pounding them in a wooden or metal mortar; the latter process is always performed by rule, a stated number of blows being given to a monotonous tune very pleasing to Arab ears. If you intend to stay the night, and are a person of consequence, a kid (always a male one, as the females are much too precious to be eaten) is slaughtered, and cooked in the women's apartment, from which proceed also sounds of grinding corn and other preparations for the banquet. All the male members of the encampment, with probably a few friends from some neighbouring tents, now drop in and sit in or around the *shigg*, waiting patiently for hours in the hope of ultimately coming in for a bone or a handful of greasy sop. When dinner is served, which is not often until past sunset, and the scraps that remain have been considerately handed over the curtain for the delectation of the ladies, pipes are lighted, and the company talk, laugh and quarrel alternately, until one by one they drop off to sleep. The unusual excitement of a good dinner occasionally lures the ladies out of their retirement, and, if any one be polite enough to offer them a pipe of tobacco, they will "join the gentlemen," though of course with a becoming sense of the condescension shewn them. The Moabite ladies are incessantly cleaning out their pipes with long pieces of wire, and, not being entirely free from the female quality of vanity, they lick up the oil and nicotine thus extracted, "because," as they say, "it so brightens the eyes." The men are a dirty, lazy set, and spend their whole time in sleeping or gossiping; they wear their hair in small plaits over the forehead, which gives them a peculiarly sinister and unpleasant expression. The children, especially the boys, are well cared for. At meal time they are allowed to partake freely of every dish, and the result is that, their food being plentifully administered and chiefly farinaceous, they develop an unnatural rotundity of abdomen that to the inexperienced stranger is positively alarming. They are for the most part entirely without clothing, except the very young ones, who wear little *ábbas* of goats' hair, on the back of which a red cross is generally sewn as a protection against the evil eye. On leaving the encampment, the visitor is expected to make a present to the sheikh of a good round sum of money; should he exhibit a tendency to commit a breach of etiquette in this respect, one of the household will take him aside and remind him. The sheikh, however, protests violently against receiving any thing, and, declaring that he cannot think of receiving money from a guest, insists on restoring it. On one or two occasions we took our entertainers at their word, and received back the money; but the good man always rode after us before we had got far, and expressed not only his willingness to accept the gift, but his decided disapprobation of the smallness of the amount.

About half-past five o'clock the next morning, just as we were ready to start, Sheikh Zeban, another of our guides, came up, and declared that he knew of the existence of a "written stone" in the ruined village of Mejdelain, at some little distance, and we accordingly started off on horseback to investigate it. It turned out to be a stone lintel, with a rough Greek key pattern upon it in relief, covered with red paint, and on the under surface some still rougher tracery representing vines.

Giving M'sellim a small *bakhshísh,* with which he was of course dissatisfied, we at last got off, and, crossing the summit of Jebel Shíhán, strolled down the valley in the north-east. This is called Wády el Weil, and was full of rudely-cut caves, which are now used by the Arabs for their winter quarters.

After another long walk across the plateau, we came at last to the magnificent ravine of Wády Mojeb. A small ruined fort stands at the top of the pass leading down into the valley; it is one of the steepest paths I have ever seen, being constructed in the face of an almost perpendicular cliff, about 1500 ft. high. At the bottom flows a clear sparkling stream, fringed on either side by a thick grove of *nebuk* (or *dom*) and other trees, beneath which we rested during the heat of the day, and feasted on the delicious fruit with which the branches were laden. After a refreshing bathe, we proceeded for a little way up the valley, to inspect a cave which the Arabs said existed there, and of which they told us wonderful stories. We found however that it was merely a naturally-formed niche in the soft limestone rock. It was covered with rude figures in red paint, representing camels and other animals (as in the Sinaitic inscriptions), and a half obliterated sentence in the Nabathæan character. These the natives believe to be the work of a fairy (*Melicheh*), and assert that they change colour every night, turning from red to green. We could not, of course, detect any signs of such a phenomenon, but it is far from improbable that something of the sort does really happen. It is well known that a red light gives a green tinge to all the unilluminated parts of an object; and the red paint in this case being low in tone would assume a greenish hue by contrast with the brilliant red light of the evening sun.

As the heat was very oppressive, and we were both rather footsore, we rode up the pass on the opposite side of the valley; and, crossing a grassy plateau called El Kúrah, arrived soon after dark at Dhíbán, the scene of the discovery of the celebrated Moabite stone. The day's march had been a very fatiguing one, and we were therefore glad to turn in as soon as possible; so, making a loaf of bread and some tea, we wrapped ourselves in our blankets, and soon slept soundly on the site of the birthplace of Mesha had Diboní, King of Moab.

It was here that the famous "Moabite Stone" was first discovered in 1868 by the Rev. F. A. Klein, an Anglican clergyman attached to the Jerusalem Mission Society. The deplorable history of this most interesting monument, the oldest Semitic record extant, is too well known; I can, nevertheless, add a few facts to the official accounts already published.

A series of astounding blunders on the part of those to whom the discovery was first communicated ended in the stone being broken to pieces by the Arabs, whose cupidity had been excited by the anxiety displayed respecting it. Had a person well acquainted with Arabic and accustomed to deal with the Bedawín gone quietly down to Dhíbán, without evincing any strong desire to obtain possession of the stone, he might have brought it to Jerusalem at the mere cost of the camel-hire. As it was, the Prussian authorities in Jerusalem obtained a *firmán* granting them permission to procure it, although the fact of Government interference was in itself certain to rouse the suspicions and hostility of the Bedawín. The next step was to offer a large reward to the Arabs if they would part with it. Here again were two grievous mistakes; in the first place, the sum was so large that they began to conceive exaggerated ideas of the value of their treasure; in the second place, it was supposed to belong to the Beni Hamídeh tribe, whereas it was really in the territory of the Hamaideh—but the European residents at Jerusalem had not yet learnt to distinguish between the two. The ‘Adwán, who were not on very friendly terms with either of the above-mentioned tribes, were next employed to negotiate for it; and, subsequently, a Christian Arab from Es Salt and Ibn Nuseir, another stranger chief, were commissioned to procure it! The result was what might have been expected—the jealousy and greed of every tribe in the country was stimulated to the utmost, a quarrel took place, and the stone was broken.

Another circumstance contributed to complicate the affair. M. de Saulcy, when travelling in Moab, discovered at Kerek part of a bas-relief which the Arabs speak of as the Hajar el ‘Abd, or “Slave’s Stone;” this he purchased from Khalíl el M‘jellí, Sheikh of the Kerek Arabs, for a much more liberal sum than it was prudent to disburse amongst such people. Hassan Abu B‘reizeh, a neighbouring sheikh, hearing of the bargain, put in his claim for a share in the proceeds of the sale. His demand was refused, and a war ensued between the two tribes, in the course of which many men were slaughtered on both sides. When so many interests become involved in the case of the Dhíbán inscription, the Hamaideh determined to cut the Gordian knot by smashing the stone to atoms, as they saw that their own chance of profiting by the disposal of it was a very slight one.

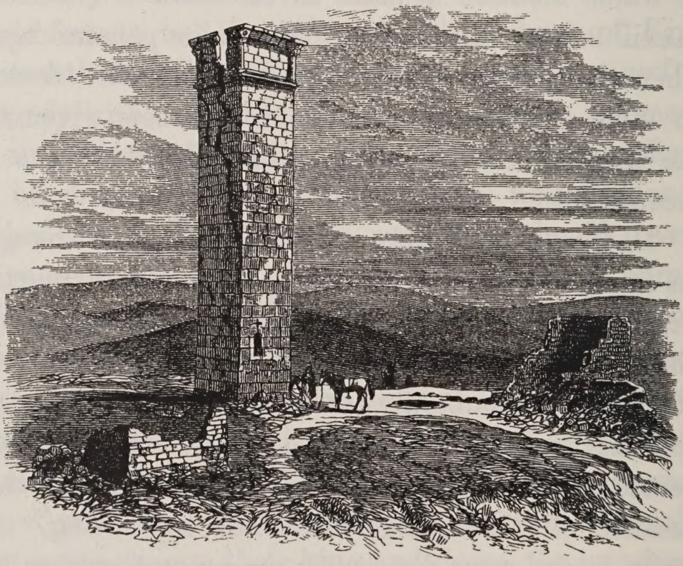
Such was the account given me by the Arabs themselves, as I passed from tribe to tribe and conversed with the very sheikhs employed in the transaction. From begining to end it was one great blunder, arising from ignorance of the country and inability to deal with the Bedawín.

The result of all this has been that the Arabs are impressed with a fixed idea that "written stones" are of incalculable value to the Franks; broken capitals, mill-stones, in fact any boulders upon which the slightest mark can be detected, are eagerly sought for and secreted, and the traveller who searches for fresh monuments must pay an exorbitant *bakhshísh* for permission to examine for himself.

The inscription commemorates the reign of a certain Mesha, King of Moab, and records the triumphs obtained by him over Israel in the course of a long and sanguinary struggle. It begins by setting forth his name and titles, and briefly recounts his successful effort to throw off the yoke of the King of Israel; then follows a list of bloody battles fought, of towns wrested from the enemy, and of spoil and captives fallen into his hands. For these conquests he returns solemn thanks to Chemosh, his god—"the abomination of Moab" (1 Kings xi. 7)—and glories with a religious fervour that sounds strangely to our ears, in having despoiled the sanctuary of Jehovah. The inscription concludes by setting forth the names of towns rebuilt or fortified by the Moabite king, of altars raised to Chemosh, of wells and cisterns dug, and other peaceful works accomplished. This portion of the record is a most valuable addition to our knowledge of sacred geography; for the names, as given on the Moabite stone, engraved by one who knew them in his daily life, are, in nearly every case, absolutely identical with those found in the Bible itself, and testify to the wonderful integrity with which the Scriptures have been preserved. So far we have the history of King Mesha's rebellion from his own Moabite point of view, and so far we read of nothing but his success; but, if we turn to 2 Kings iii. 5—27, we may look upon the other side of the picture. In that passage we have a concise but vivid account of the rebellion and temporary successes against Israel of this same monarch. There we learn how the allied Kings of Israel, Judah and Edom, went against the rebellious prince; how they marched by way of Edom, that is round by the southern end of the Dead Sea, how they devastated the land of Moab, and drove their foeman to take refuge in his fortress of Kir-Haraseth in Wády Kerek. Then comes the awful tragedy with which the history ends: Mesha, hemmed in and driven to despair, made one last furious effort to burst through the besieging lines; he failed, and "then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall." The concluding portion of this verse is curious, for it goes on to say: "And there was great indignation against Israel, and they departed from him and returned to their own land." Can it be that, goaded to madness by this supreme act of grim devotion and despair, the men of Moab rose up to avenge their king and drove the invaders from the land? If so, we have in this inscription, so strangely rescued from the oblivion of three thousand years, the sequel to the Biblical account; and we can understand the tone of mingled reverence and dread with which King Mesha seems to look upon the dark divinity, who, he believed, had sold him victory at such a fearful price. The passage quoted above speaks of the author of the Dhíbán inscription in the following terms: "And Mesha, King of Moab, was a sheep-master, and rendered unto the King of Israel an hundred thousand lambs and an hundred thousand rams with the wool." Here again the Bible receives fresh confirmation from geographical facts; Moab, with its extensive grass-covered uplands is even now an essentially sheep-breeding country, although the "fenced cities and folds for sheep," of which mention is made in the book of Numbers (xxxii. 36), are all in ruins. But in its palmier days, when those rich pastures were covered with flocks, no more appropriate title could have been given to the king of such a country than that he "was a sheep-master."

Dhíbán is now only a ruined village, although the numerous traces of buildings which exist in the vicinity indicate that it was once a flourishing town. The principal remains stand upon two hills, one of which was undoubtedly the site of the sanctuary of Chemosh, in which the monument of Mesha was erected. The architecture is all late Roman, the remains of the ancient Moabite city being, no doubt, buried some feet below the present surface of the soil. A wall runs round the town, and near the gate of this, at the point where the high road comes in, the stone was found. Its preservation is, apparently, due to the fact of the later occupants of the site having made use of it in constructing the foundations of their city wall; when this in turn had yielded to the destructive influence of time, and the earth of the hill-side had also fallen away, the stone rolled down into the valley, and was once more brought forth to the light of day. We inspected the spot where it had been broken up by the Bedawín, and carefully examined every fragment that remained; but, unfortunately, all the written parts were gone.

Mounting our horses, we rode across the open country beneath a burning sun, and made for a ruined town called Umm Rasás, where we had been led to expect that an inscription might be found.



TOWER AT UMM RASÁS.

It turned out, however, to be nothing but a rude sepulchral Nabathæan monument, of which a squeeze-impression had already reached Jerusalem.

The town of Umm Rasás is of considerable extent, and contains two large churches belonging to the Byzantine period. It is surrounded by a strong buttressed wall, and is about 400 yards square. Outside the town to the north is a suburb, and farther on in the valley a number of rock-cut reservoirs, a square building, and a tower about 50ft. high, ornamented at the top by a rather pretty architectural device. The inside has been filled with large stones, which completely block up the staircase. There is a legend that it was built by a Christian chief for his son, in order to protect the latter from the fulfilment of a prophecy, which foretold that on his marriage-night a wild beast would devour him. He was at last married to a lovely girl, the bride being brought to him in the tower in order to avoid the dreaded consequence. She, however, turned out to be a Ghúleh (Ghoul), and, assuming the form of a wild beast, devoured him then and there. The windows of both the churches and the tower are ornamented with crosses rudely sculptured. From the size and extent of the ruined city, and the two fine churches which it contains, it is evident that Umm Rasás must have been a town of considerable importance during the Christian occupation of the Holy Land. I believe that I can identify it with one of the archi-episcopal cities mentioned in the Jerusalem manuscript list already quoted. The city in question is called Μέρων, or Μέρου; this might well be a corruption of the original name, which in Arabic has still further degenerated into Umm Rasás, "the Mother of Lead."

On the east this province is said to extend as far as the boundary which separates it from Ausitis, and as far as the tower of Sylitus. The metropolitan see of Ausitis is also said to be divided from that of Petra by the Wády Mojib*. These notices accord with the situation of Umm Rasás, and the tower represented in the accompanying engraving is very probably identical with "the tower of Sylitus." The latter name is preserved in that of the Arabs who occupy the place, and who are called Es Salíteh.

After a long and thirsty ride—for the day was an exceedingly hot one—we reached the edge of the plateau and descended into some of the smaller wádies; in one of these, near a ruin called Khirbet el Ghazáleh, we came across a camp of the S'khúr Arabs (singular S'kheri), and had a drink of *leben* and a bowl of sopped bread with them in the "shigg." From this point we struck Wády el Butmeh (so called from the number of terebinth-trees with which it abounds), and presently descended by a steep and difficult pass into Wády Wáleh. Here was a beautiful little river, dashing over the rocky bed, and filled with fish. Our men had been told to wait for us at the camp of the Hamaideh in this valley, and, as that was pitched some distance down, we did not reach it until past nightfall. On our way we passed a curious isolated rock and a ruined mill. The next morning we remained in camp, and amused ourselves by bathing in the stream and catching fish; we obtained a good dish of *shemel* (a species of chad) by chasing them about in the shallows and catching them with our hands, or "tickling" them as they lay under the banks. The stream is a very pretty one, flowing over a rugged bed of hard white limestone, and bordered by thickets of flowering oleanders. Here and there it narrows into a deep rushing torrent, and again falls over the stones in little sparkling cascades. In one place we found a pool, deep and long enough to afford us a very comfortable swim, which we indulged in twice during the day. While we were in the water, we received a visit of ceremony from Sheikh Hassan Abu B'raizeh, from Kerek, who was encamped close by and had come to invite us to his tents, making great promises of friendship, and offering us as presents his gun, horse, and pistol. We consented to accept a small kid, as he too had some stones to tell us of, but they turned out to be the same which we had ourselves seen at Shíhán. The weather was exceedingly hot, and as we sat writing in the tent at night, with the thermometer at 107° Fahr^{t}, the candle suddenly melted away by our side.

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* *'Η Μέρων ἢ Μέρου· ἡ ἐνορία αὐτῆς ἐκ τοῦ νοτίου μέρους ἕως τοῦ χειμάῤῥου, καὶ ἐξ ἀνατολῶν μέσον ταύτης τῆς ἐνορίας καὶ τῆς γῆς Αὐσίτιδος, καὶ ἕως τοῦ πύργου τοῦ Συλίτου......οὗτος ὁ ποταμὸς (Μούζιπ) διαχωρίζει ἀνὰ μέσον ταύτης τῆς Μητροπόλεως (Πέτρας) καὶ τῆς Μητροπόλεως Βόστρων τῆς Αὐσίτιδος.*

Leaving Wády Wáleh by sunrise, we mounted our horses once more, and, after riding for some hours through magnificent scenery amid the ruins of ancient towns, we came to a deep glen called Wády ‘Ayún ed Dheib, in the centre of which was a deserted village. Matlag, one of our men, declared that he had found and buried in this place a stone like the Dhíbán one. He described it as rather redder in colour, in shape like the breast of a man, and having incised writing on the upper side. It was set (he continued) in a kind of pedestal formed of masonry covered with stucco. We were just starting for the spot when we found that some Arabs were encamped near it, and our men began making excuses and refused to proceed; we were therefore obliged to return, much disappointed, and determined to send Matlag for a squeeze. It proved, however, to be nothing but a Nabathæan inscription. At last we reached the edge of the Moabite plateau, and stood upon the heights of Nebo. Here again we met with stone circles, of the type so familiar to us in the Tíh, and one gigantic cairn which the Arabs called El Maslúbíyeh, or “the Crucifixion.” The prospect that we gazed down upon from that commanding spot—the same from which the aged Lawgiver of Israel gazed for the first time upon the Promised Land, and looked his last upon the world —was indeed magnificent. The hills of Palestine rose up before us; at our feet the Jordan meandered along its noble valley to the calm blue waters of the Dead Sea; and, as we meditated on the scene, the solemn words of Deuteronomy (xxxiv. 4) came to our minds with a reality which they had never before assumed; "This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes."

Our sojourn in Moab was expensive and unsatisfactory; we visited camp after camp, staying with the various sheikhs, passing from tribe to tribe, and living *à la Arabe* in order to gain their confidence. In this way we succeeded in inspecting every known "written stone" in the country, besides examining and searching the ruins for ourselves; but the conclusion at last forced itself upon us that, *above ground* at least, there does not exist another Moabite stone.

If a few intelligent and competent men, such as those employed in the Jerusalem excavations, could be taken out to Moab, and certain of the ruins be excavated, further interesting discoveries might be made. Such researches might be made without difficulty if the Arabs were well managed and the expedition possessed large resources; but it must be remembered that the country is only nominally subject to the Turkish Government, and is filled with lawless tribes, jealous of each other and of the intrusion of strangers, and all greedily claiming a property in every stone, written or unwritten, which they think might interest a Frank.

That many treasures do lie buried among the ruins of Moab there can be but little doubt; the

Arabs indeed narrated to us several instances of gold coins and figures having been found by them while ploughing in the neighbourhood of the ancient cities, and sold to jewellers at Nablous, by whom they were probably melted up. Near Kerek are some ancient remains, situated on two hillocks (*hárithein*) like those at Dhíbán, and an Arab legend says that: "Between Kefráz and Kefrúz (the two hillocks in question) are buried 100,000 jars, containing the wealth of Hakmon the Jew." I think it probable, therefore, that, if an expedition to Moab for the purposes of legitimate excavation were organised, some other interesting monuments of antiquity might yet be discovered.

On the morning of May 10, 1870, we started before it was light, and at about 10 o'clock reached the ford of the Jordan. The river is hidden in the midst of a forest of large *tarfah* and other trees, some of the former being nearly 30ft. in height; the stream is very rapid and rather muddy, flowing through high banks of marl; only a small portion of it can be seen at a time, as it soon loses itself in a thick jungle of canes and rushes. We crossed over by a ferry-boat, which slides along a guide-rope, and while the beasts were being taken across we enjoyed a most refreshing bathe in the holy river. Then, after a cup of coffee in the '*Arísh*, or straw hut, the abode of the ferrymen, we remounted our horses, rode on to Jericho, and our wanderings in the Desert of the Exodus were at an end.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE EXODUS.

Canons of Criticism. Route of the Israelites; Sinai to Kadesh; additional reasons for the identification of the latter site with 'Ain Gadís; the eleven days' journey from Horeb; the Wilderness of Paran. The Mission of the Spies. Defeat by the Amalekites and Canaanites. The Forty Years' wanderings; their nature and locality; condition of the Israelites during this period. The encampment at Mount Hor. Defeat by Arad the Canaanite; the "way of the spies." The Journey to "compass Mount Seir;" stations to the east of Moab. Defeat of Sihon, king of the Amorites. Encampment in the Plains of Moab. The southern border of Palestine as defined by Moses. Conclusion.

If we were examining some historical record of our own land, which had been handed down to us from ancient times with a constant tradition in favour of its authenticity, we should proceed to compare the statements contained in it with well known topographical and archæological facts, convinced that each would serve to throw additional light upon the other. But in examining the Bible, which comes to us with the highest authority of any book in the world, many men seem to be actuated by an entirely different spirit. Some, professing to place implicit faith in it, are afraid to expose it to the test of ordinary criticism; while others, with equal unfairness and want of logic, start with the assumption that it is untrue, and seize with avidity any apparent discrepancy in proof of their own hypothesis. Now I believe that the Book to which I pin my faith contains an intelligent account of facts, and I would apply to it the same canons which I should to any other, feeling assured that it will come forth from the test with all the more credit; and I am content to assume, until the contrary is proved, that any apparent contradiction is more likely to arise from ignorance of facts on my part than from mis-statements of them in the Volume itself. With this confession of the spirit in which I approach the enquiry, I will endeavour to show how far the title I have adopted, namely, the Desert of the Exodus, applies to the country I have described. I cannot do this better than by reviewing side by side the Biblical account of the Wanderings of the Chosen People and the topographical results of our own journeyings.

Fourteen months after their departure from Egypt "the Children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran." (Numbers x. 12.) As, on leaving Egypt, they had had before them the definite object of reaching the Mount of the Law, there to receive that dispensation which should change them from a throng of homeless fugitives to a nation chosen of the Lord, so, on leaving Sinai, they were conducted to a point where they might drive out before them the idolatrous peoples who barred their way, and might enter at once upon their heritage, the Promised Land. The verse, then, above-quoted refers only to the general destination; the following chapters give the detailed account of the journey.

The first permanent halting-place was Kibroth Hattaavah, where the people, lusting for flesh, were answered by the miraculous supply of quails, and subsequently punished for their discontent by the grievous plague which caused them to leave so many behind them, buried in the Kibroth Hattaavah, or "graves of lust." I have already described the curious remains at Erweis el Ebeirig, and given my reasons for believing that they are the traces of this very camp; there is another fact which furnishes perhaps some slight additional evidence in favour of the identification. At the beginning of the account of this event we are told that the sedition originated with "the mixed multitude," or, as it would be more accurately translated, the *riff raff**, the mob of strangers who had followed the Israelite host from Egypt.

Now it is curious that, within a few miles of the site which I propose, we find a Wády Tahmeh, so called, the Bedawín say, "from a plant of that name;" but properly this plant is *Tahmá*, while the word *Tahmeh* denotes "a mixed multitude"—especially (as the Arabic lexicographers are careful to inform us) "a mixed multitude in a state of sedition."

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* See *The Speaker's Commentary*, on Numbers xi. 4.

They "journeyed from Kibroth Hattaavah unto Hazeroth and abode at Hazeroth." (Numbers xi. 35.) We may without difficulty identify Hazeroth with 'Ain Hudherah, which corresponds not only in the Semitic orthography of the name but also in being situated exactly a day's journey from Erweis el Ebeirig. The route, then, from Sinai to Hazeroth, the second permanent camp, coincides with our own from Jebel Músa to 'Ain Hudherah, by Wády es Sheikh, Abu Suweirah and Wády Sa'al, with a long halt at Erweis el Ebeirig.

"And afterwards the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran." (Num. xii. 16.) In chap. xxxiii, details of the various stages by which this journey was performed are given in full. There are 20 stations mentioned, and one of these is Ezion Gaber, which was at the head of the Elanitic Gulf; it is therefore certain that they took the route by 'Akabah, and did not enter the Tíh by any of the passes in the southern edge of the plateau. As the piece of country north-east of 'Ain Hudherah and south-west of the 'Azázimeh mountains did not fall within our own line of march, I cannot speak with certainty to the identification of individual stations, but I have no doubt whatever as to the general direction of the Israelites' journey, and believe that all, or at least a great portion, of the unidentified names may be recovered in that district. Amongst them we notice Rissah, Haradah, Tahath, which correspond in etymology with Rasa, 'Arádeh and Elt'hí; the first is marked in the Peutinger Tables as lying between 'Akabah and Gypsaria or Contellet Garaiyeh, and the two last were actually visited by us on our way from Hazeroth. Heshmonah, again, is undoubtedly identical with Heshmon, which is enumerated in Joshua xv. 21, among "the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah towards the coast of Edom southwards" (*i.e.* in the Negeb). This fixes its position in the mountains of the 'Azázimeh, and points conclusively to the road which skirts the south-western extremity of Jebel Magráh as that followed by the Children of Israel. On this supposition, the Wilderness of Zin, which is sometimes spoken of as though it were identical with Kadesh, will be the south-east corner of the Desert of Et Tíh between 'Akabah and the head of Wády Garaiyeh.

The name Kadesh—though belonging more particularly to the open space immediately below the cliff (*Sela*) in which 'Aín Gadís, or the Spring of Kadesh, rises—might easily have been extended in its application to the whole region, as the name of the spot in which the most important events took place. This would account for the apparent discrepancies in the Biblical references to the locality, which at one time is said to be in the Wilderness of Paran (Num. xiii. 26), at another to be situated in the Wilderness of Zin (Deut. xxxii. 51), and, again, is defined with Heshmon as being one of the uttermost cities of the tribe of Judah southwards.

I concur with Wilton* in believing that the

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* "The Negeb," p. 124.

Wilderness of Paran comprised the whole Desert of Et Tíh, and that Mount Paran was the southernmost portion of the mountain plateau in the north-east, at present inhabited by the ʿAzázimeh Arabs and known as Jebel Magráh. In this, ʻAin Gadís, or Kadesh, is situated, and as it lies below the southern border of the Negeb it is not included in the region into which Israel made the unsuccessful attempt to penetrate. To one encamped in the Wilderness of Kadesh, that is, the open plain into which Wády Gadís debouches, Jebel Magráh would be always the most conspicuous object in the scene, and would completely shut out the view of the more fertile mountains beyond.

It was from Kadesh in the Wilderness of Paran that "Moses, by the commandment of the Lord," sent the twelve men "to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain......So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron...... And they came unto the brook (or wády) of Eshkol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs." (Num. xiii. 3, 17, 21, 22, 23.)

Mistranslation and imperfect information respecting the country have made this passage one of the most difficult topographical notices in the Bible, but to my mind it conveys a clear and definite indication of the track followed by the spies. The Israelites were encamped, according to my theory, at the foot of the line of cliffs in which 'Aín Gadís takes its rise, and their intention was evidently to march straight upon Palestine by the short and easy route which skirts the western edge of the mountains.

The Canaanites were in all probability perfectly aware of this, and would not only collect in great force to repel the threatened invasion, but would regard with suspicion any strangers who might come this way. Under these circumstances, the spies were to "get them up by way of the Negeb," not by the plains in which the Canaanites were assembling, but to "go up into the mountain." This they could only do by skirting the southern end of the 'Azázimeh mountains and striking into the heart of the plateau at Wády Ghamr. We must bear in mind that roads in such regions as this are determined by certain physical conditions. The only two practicable roads at the present day are, as we have seen, identical with the Roman roads, and we may fairly conclude that the latter coincided with those in use at the time of the Exodus. Unless, then, they followed the one to the west of the mountains, they must have taken that which passes through the heart of the mountain—in fact, have followed Moses' directions and gone up by the mountain portion of the Negeb. In order to do this, they must have retraced their steps through the desert to the south of the plateau, and that district I have already suggested as identical with the Wilderness of Zin. Having, then, penetrated into

Palestine by this road, and searched the country as far as its northern boundary "as men come to Hamath," that is, as far as the plain of Cœle-Syria, they returned by way of Hebron, and explored—as, coming from the north, they might now do without suspicion—the route by the western edge of the mountains. In one of these extensive valleys—perhaps in Wády Hanein, where miles of grape-mounds even now meet the eye—they cut the gigantic cluster of grapes, and gathered the pomegranates and figs, to shew how goodly was the land which the Lord had promised for their inheritance. They would thus literally have "searched the land from the Wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath."

The mission of the spies, and the cowardice and rebellion of the people, consequent upon their unfavourable report of the country, led to the dreadful sentence being pronounced which compelled them to wander for forty years in the wilderness; and they were accordingly commanded to relinquish the proposed attack upon the Canaanites and Amalekites. Ever perverse, however, they neglected the warning and "presumed to go up unto the hill-top... there the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them and discomfited them even unto Hormah." This place, as I have already shewn, is probably identical with Sebaita. The Israelites, then, must have made for the Hills of the Amorites (those in the north-east of Wády Hanein) in which the forces of their enemies were no doubt concentrated. Had they succeeded in forçing their way into this locality, both roads to Palestine would have been open to them: either the western route by Ruheibeh and Khalasah, or that through the heart of the mountains by the Dheigat-el-'Amirín and Wády Marreh. The mention of their discomfiture "even unto Hormah" is most suggestive; the pass commanded by the fort of El Meshrifeh* is the key to the whole position, and, if the opposing forces could not defend this against the invading army, their cause would have been lost. The Arab tradition† of a war between the two peoples who, before their time, held the fort of El Meshrifeh and the town of Sebaita may even refer to the very battle mentioned in the Bible.

Moses, speaking to the assembled hosts of Israel on this side Jordan, in the fortieth year of their wanderings, briefly reviews the events which had happened since their departure from Egypt (Deut. i.). The topographical notices contained in this passage are most instructive and throw much light upon this portion of the route.

From verse 2 we learn that "there are eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir unto Kadesh Barnea." The itinerary in Num. xxxiii. gives twenty-two stations between Horeb and Kadesh; but the route followed by the Israelites was evidently a devious one, and without this verse our identification would have been only conjectural. The specification, however, of the actual distance between the two places in this, and of the direction of the road in the other chapters, brings us into the region of absolute certainty. The eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh are as follows:

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* Hormah is elsewhere called Zephath; the name Sebaita is exactly equivalent to this in orthography, and Meshrifeh in signification, both meaning "a tower or building upon an eminence."

† See p. 375.

1. Erweis el Ebeirig (Kibroth Hattaavah).
2. 'Ain Hudherah (Hazeroth).
3.
4. Three days' journey for the modern traveller from Sinai.
5.
6. 'Akabah (Elath).
7. Diana* (Ezion Gaber).
8. Rasa*.
9. Contellet Garaiyeh (Gypsaria*)
10. Lussán (Lysa*).
11. 'Ain Gadís. (Kadesh).

Again, in verses 6, 7 we read: "The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites." The mount of the Amorites is here identified with the point to which they were directed after leaving Sinai, at which they should have defeated the Canaanites and other opposing nations, that is, the neighbourhood of Kadesh. But I have before shown that the hills around Meshrifeh are certainly identical with the mount of the Amorites; Kadesh is therefore the desert south of the pass into those hills; and in the cliffs above that desert is ‘Ain Gadís. In verses 19, 20, the text is still more explicit, for it says: “we came to Kadesh Barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites.” Upon any other identification of the sites, it is impossible to reconcile the passages in Numbers and Deuteronomy either with each other or with the actual topography of the country.

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* See page 422, note. Diana=Ghadyán=Ezion; the letters in the Hebrew and Arabic being the same, and corresponding phonetically with the Latin.

At this point begins the history of the Wanderings as distinct from that of the Exodus. In the marches from Egypt to Sinai for the purpose of receiving the Law, and from Sinai to Kadesh with the intention of attacking the Canaanites, the Children of Israel had a definite object in view, the itineraries are minute and explicit, and the chronology is carefully recorded. But the events of the next thirty-eight years are crowded into a few verses; between the defeat at Hormah and the reassembling of the people at Kadesh for the final advance upon Canaan, in the fortieth year of the Exodus, there is a great gap in the narrative. Failure and disappointment, added to the burden of conscious sin which they could only expiate by long, weary wanderings, appear to have paralyzed the energies of the Israelitish hosts; and the history of that period is almost a blank, or, at best, a mere record of murmurings, sorrows, and forebodings. The rebellion of Korah and his company, the death of Miriam, and the second miracle of striking the rock, are the only incidents of which mention is made; and in the last-named the despairing unbelief of the tribes so angered Moses that he sinned against the Lord, involving himself and Aaron in the general ban of exclusion from the Promised Land. As God's chosen people, led on to victory by His visible presence, their every movement was worthy to be chronicled; but, when the immediate Divine guidance was withdrawn, they sank to the level of a mere nomad tribe and experienced, no doubt, the fluctuating fortunes of a Bedawín horde. Moses himself designedly passes over their expiatory wanderings in as few words as possible, and the only passage in the Bible which can with certainty be taken for a description of them is that in Deut. i. 46: "So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according to the days that ye abode there." The direction in Numbers xiv. 25, "To-morrow turn you and get you into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea," seems to me to indicate the direction to be hereafter followed when they should once more march upon the Promised Land. This is evident from the statement in Deut. ii. 1: "We turned and took our journeys into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed Mount Seir many days." The last passage can refer to no other journey than that in which Aaron died, in the fortieth year of the Exodus. They could not have gone round the head of the Elanitic Gulf and compassed Mount Seir before that time, because in that case they would have been for years in actual possession of the very country, that to the east of Edom, to reach which they applied for a passage through the Edomite territory. In the fortieth year we find them at Kadesh, and that fact is sufficient to prove that they could not have penetrated into the eastern desert before. We are forced then to the conclusion that the wanderings took place in the desert west of the ‘Arabah and Gulf of ‘Akabah, that is, in the peninsula which comprises Sinai and Bádiet et Tíh, or the Wilderness of the Wanderings. The whole of the mountain district in the north-east of Et Tíh was in the hands of their enemies, the road by Gaza and Philistia was still more strongly barred against them, and to have crossed Wády el ‘Arísh would have brought them into Egyptian territory; they were therefore confined to the desert south and south-west of the ‘Azázimeh mountains, that is, "the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh." They would, however, have free access to the Sinaitic peninsula, especially to the north-east corner of it. This country, although of no considerable extent, supports, even at the present day, a large Bedawín population; and there is no difficulty in supposing that, at a time when we know it must have been more fertile, it was capable of supporting even so large a host as that of the Israelites. Their flocks and herds would afford them ample means of subsistence, as do those of the Arabs of the present day, whom they undoubtedly resembled in their mode of life. Nor need their relations with the surrounding peoples occasion us any surprise; the Amalekites, their Bedawín neighbours, had been already conquered, and would not now offer any opposition to them; while the more powerful and civilised nations of the Negeb and of Canaan would not be likely to molest them, so long as they showed no disposition to aggress, and did not interfere with the lines of communication between Egypt and their lands. This is exactly the attitude now taken by the Governments of Egypt, Syria and Arabia, with respect to the wandering tribes by which those countries are surrounded. When, however, their term of punishment was at an end, and they were once more on the move, we find all these peoples again assuming attitudes of hostility and menace.

In treating of this record of the Wanderings of the Children of Israel, it is only their own popular conceptions, and the application of European canons of criticism to Oriental records, which have misled commentators, and even induced some to declare the whole history improbable and untrustworthy. The critic of the ultra-rationalist school starts with an assumption: to his mind the Bible account conveys the idea that the Children of Israel marched on in military order, striking camp in the morning and pitching it again at night, daily for forty years—and that within the compass of a few hundred miles. He naturally concludes that this is improbable in the highest degree; and, having set up his own stumblingblock, proceeds with Quixotic ardour to demolish it; and when he has done this he believes that he has demonstrated the inaccuracy and incredibility of Scripture. Intelligently read, however, the Bible will be found consistent in both its historical and topographical details. There is nothing strange or unnatural in their adapting themselves thus easily to Bedawí life. It was, after all, but a reversion to the patriarchal, that is, nomad traditions of their race—a following in the footsteps of their father Abraham, the sheikh of sheikhs.

At last the time of their deliverance drew nigh, and Israel prepared to set forward once more on their journeys. Again the detailed form of narrative is taken up, and the events of the fortieth year of their wanderings are minutely recorded. The people were assembled at Kadesh for their final march to Canaan, "and Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom," demanding a passage through his territory "by the king's highway." The roads to Palestine by way of the Negeb and the Tíh being barred against the passage of the Israelites, they naturally looked towards the 'Arabah. For a long distance, by "the coast of Edom," the road was open to them as far as the southern Ghor. There, however, as they well knew, insuperable obstacles lay in their path; the cliffs of Moab on the east, and of Palestine on the west, of the Dead Sea are practicable only by difficult and rugged ravines, which, if held by even a small hostile force, it would be impossible to traverse. If, however, they could obtain permission to pass through the heart of the mountains of Edom by Seil Dhalal, Wády T'lah*, or any other of the practicable valleys north of Petra, they might strike the road now known as the Derb-el-Hajj, and march without opposition to the ford of the Jordan, emerging upon the plains of Abel Shittim by Wády Hesbán. Permission was refused; but, pending the arrival of an answer from the Edomite monarch, the Children of Israel "journeyed from Kadesh and came unto Mount Hor." (Num. xx. 22.) The position assigned to Mount Hor in the next verse, namely, "by the coast of the land of Edom," the testimony of ancient writers, and constant tradition, all combine to identify that mountain with the lofty summit now called Jebel Hárún. This rises so conspicuously above the heights which form "the coast" (or border) "of Edom" as to deserve the name, given to it in the Bible, of *Ha Hor*, or The Mountain. On the summit, as I before remarked, is shown the reputed tomb of Aaron.

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* See p. 458.

The encampment of the Israelites was most probably in the 'Arabah, at the foot of the mountains of Wády Músa; and their messenger, coming from the capital of Edom, might be expected to return by the Nagb er Rubá'í. Until the answer came, the chiefs would naturally frequent the summit of the mountains, to survey the country and speculate upon their route, and this they might easily do without attracting the attention of the natives, or encountering opposition. At the present day, when the summit of Jebel Hárún is guarded with jealous care and looked upon as sacred, our own experience proves the chances to be in favour of a visitor's escaping observation from below; how much more, then, when the barren summit possessed no features likely to attract attention to it! But the mountain was to be invested with a lasting interest both for the people themselves and for all future ages; here, by the command of God, Aaron was led up to die, and the spot where all the house of Israel "mourned for Aaron thirty days" was ever afterwards remembered as the encampment at "the mount."

"And when king 'Arad, the Canaanite*, which dwelt in the south (Negeb), heard tell that Israel came by way of the spies; then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners."

This is, perhaps, the most difficult passage in the whole account, and has given rise to more various conjectures than any other. Many commentators have objected to the rendering of the *atharim*, "spies," and have sought to connect it with the Arabic *athár*, signifying footmarks or beaten tracks. I do not myself see any difficulty in the matter, and believe that, if we are content to take the narrative for what it obviously is, namely, a straightforward account of events which really happened, we shall find that it is capable of being reconciled with the topographical facts.

The verse evidently records a distinct episode in the march of the Israelites, and not a stage on their journey. This is clear, from its position in the text, between the account of Aaron's death on Mount Hor (xx. 29) and the departure of the

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* More properly: "the Canaanite, the King of Arad."

Children of Israel "to compass the Land of Edom." Whichever meaning we assign to the word *atharim*, "by way of the spies" or "by the beaten track," it can scarcely refer to any other than the road through the heart of the ʽAzázimeh mountains which comes into the ʽArabah immediately opposite that part of the range of Mount Seir in which Mount Hor is situated. Now during the thirty days which we are told the people spent in this spot it is only natural that they should have made an attempt to penetrate into the Promised Land by the nearest route, before retracing their steps to the head of the Gulf of ʽAkabah along the same road which they had travelled thirty-eight years before.

Some portion at least of the army, we may suppose, endeavoured to force their way by this road, but met with determined opposition from the Canaanitish sovereign to whom that part of the country belonged. The next two verses confirm this supposition; Israel, again disappointed and repulsed, "vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah." The last statement is evidently parenthetical, and refers to the subsequent transaction described in Judges i. 16, 17; for, had it taken place at the time at which it is introduced into the narrative, there would have been no further opposition to their marching straight through the Negeb into the Promised Land, whereas in verse 4 we learn that they went round by the head of the gulf of ʻArabah to the east of Edom.

"And they journeyed from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom." (Numbers xxi. 4.) The object and direction of this journey is quite clear; they proceeded southwards towards the head of the Gulf of ʻAkabah, and entered the mountains by Wády Ithm, a few hours north of Ezion-gaber, intending to march northwards to Moab by the road which runs between Edom and the limestone plateau of the great eastern desert. In Deut. ii. 8, the route is more definitely given: "And we passed by from our brethren the Children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath (ʻAkabah), and from Ezion-gaber (Wády Ghadyán) we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab."

"And the Children of Israel set forward and pitched in Oboth. And they journeyed from Oboth and pitched at Ije-Abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab towards the sunrising. From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared." (Num. xxi. 10—12.) In chap. xxxiii. 41, 42, two stations, Zalmonah and Punon, are interposed between Mount Hor and Oboth. These places are possibly identical with the three stations on the Darb el Hajj, viz. ʻAlem Maan, ʻAnezeh and El Ahsa; indeed there is some slight etymological connection between the first two, but not sufficient to enable us to speak with any certainty. Ije-Abarim, however, is defined with sufficient precision in the text as lying in the desert to the east of Moab, so that we can have no difficulty in determining the route which they were following. The brook Zared may either be Seil Garáhí or Wády 'Ain Feranjí south of Kerek: *zared* signifies "willow," and corresponds to the Arabic *sufsáfeh,* the name given to a small wády which unites with the last of the two valleys mentioned.

"From thence (Zared) they removed and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites; for Arnon is the border of Moab between Moab and the Amorites." (Num. xxi. 13.) The Arnon or Wády Mojib, as we have already seen, divides the hill-plateau of Moab into two portions. The Children of Israel had no quarrel with the Moabites and had hitherto kept along to the east of their territory. But, north of the Arnon, the country was in the hands of the Amorites, old enemies of the Israelites at the very outset of their career, and no friendly considerations kept them from trespassing on their borders. The Arnon, therefore, once passed, they turned westward, and we find them encamping in "the country (plateau) of Moab itself."

"From the wilderness they went to Mattanah: and from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth: and from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country (or plateau) of Moab, to the top of Pisgah." (Numbers xxi. 18—20.)

These again cannot be identified with any degree of certainty, unless perhaps we find Nahaliel in the wády now called Enkheileh, which is one of the principal tributaries of Wády Mojib from the north.

In Numbers xxxiii. 45, 46, only three stations are mentioned between Oboth and the encampment before (i. e. east of) Nebo, namely Ije-Abarim, Dibon-gad, and Almon-Diblathaim. As the position of Dibon is well known, we can ascertain, as in the previous cases, the direction of the Israelites' march.

They were now steadily advancing towards Wády Hesbán, by which they hoped to descend into the plains east of Jericho. But "Heshbon was the city of Sihon, King of the Amorites, who had fought against the former King of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon;" and a momentous question was at issue, namely, whether they should pass peaceably through his dominions or fight their way to the Jordan inch by inch. A request similar to that made to the King of Edom was addressed to the Amorite monarch, and in like manner contemptuously refused. The Children of Israel had not resented this discourtesy on Edom's part, for the Lord had commanded them not to meddle with their "brethren the children of Esau" (Deut. ii. 4, 5), but no such restrictions withheld them in the present case. They were, moreover, no longer a dispirited and fugitive throng, as when the Canaanites and the Amorites drove them back even to Hormah. The crimes of those who had tempted the Lord at Meribah had been expiated by a long period of exclusion from their promised heritage;

not one of those who had murmured against God and against Moses survived, but in their stead a race of enthusiastic young warriors had sprung up; the time of deliverance was at hand, former obstacles had yielded one by one, and Jehovah the God of Israel was once more among their armies. Against such a host, animated by such feelings, resistance was in vain; the haughty Sihon fell before them: "Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land, from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon, for the border of the children of Ammon was strong."

The country thus occupied by the Israelites is clearly defined: the whole of the Belka from Rabbath Ammon (now 'Ammán) at the head of Wády Zerka to Wády Mojib in the south; the long coveted road in Wády Hesbán was at last open to them, they descended "from the mountains of Abarím before (east of) Nebo, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho," occupying with their immense encampment the whole space "from Beth Jesimoth even unto Abel-Shittim." (Num. xxxiii. 47—49.)

A remarkable episode of their sojourn in the plains of Moab is that of the expedition against Midian narrated in Numbers xxxi. 1—12. Having conquered the country north of Arnon from the Amorites, and subdued Og king of Bashạn and the mountains of Gilead, the way was open to them as far as the eastern desert. While "compassing mount Seir," and passing to the east of Edom and

Moab, they had come into contact with the Midianites, and the licentious idolatry of the latter people had corrupted and demoralized the host; now, therefore, that they were securely established in the plains over against Jericho, and had leisure for consolidating their plans of aggression and attack, Moses is commanded to "avenge the Lord on Midian." Local tradition is most probably correct in identifying Midian with the extensive ruins of El Midáyen, a station on the Darb El Hajj between Damascus and Mecca, three days distant from the latter town. This lends colour to my own supposition that the stations between Mount Hor and the brook Zared are not to be regarded as portions of a continuous march, but rather as indicating the posts successively carried and specially named because they brought the Israelites nearer to the Promised Land. This journey obviously occupied a period longer by some months than was necessary to perform an unimpeded march over the ground; and this mention of Midian appears to me to prove that, though steadily advancing, they moved in Bedawín order, subdivided into numerous encampments and spread over an immense surface of country, extending even some distance into the Hejjáz.

The topography of the remaining episodes—the conquest of Bashan, the prophecy of Balaam, the ascent of Moses into Mount Pisgah to die, the crossing of the Jordan, the destruction of Jericho, and final entry into Palestine—follows naturally from what has gone before. With the encampment in the plains of Moab, and the occupation by the Israelites of the upland plateau from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all difficulty in following their movements is at an end, for we have brought them through the Desert of the Exodus to the threshold of the Promised Land.

The credibility of much that I have urged, especially as to the identification of the latter part of the route, depends upon the accurate determination of the sites of Kadesh and the Wilderness of Zin, and of the limits of the Negeb, or South Country. Numbers xxxiv. 3—5, affords a crucial test of this; for there, in the definition by Moses of the southern border of Canaan, we have a comprehensive account of the geographical position and extent of this very district. If the identifications which satisfied the conditions required by the narrative of the Exodus satisfy also this independent topographical notice, we may fairly assume that we have been upon the right track; but if not, all our hypotheses must fall to the ground. Let us see how the test applies. The passage in question (adopting the revised marginal reading in the Speaker's Commentary) is as follows:

"Then your south quarter shall extend from the wilderness of Zin, which resteth upon the site of Edom. And your south border shall start from the extremity of the salt sea on the east; and your border shall turn on the south to Maaleh Akrabbim, and shall pass on towards Zin, and the extent of its reach on the south, shall be Kadesh Barnea; and it shall reach from thence to Hazar-Addar, and shall pass on to Azmon, and from Azmon the border shall turn to the river of Egypt, and its reach shall be the sea." This is, in other words: Your south quarter shall extend as far as the Wilderness of Zin, that is, to the desert south of the 'Azázimeh mountains. The limits of this shall be defined by drawing a line southwards, from the extremity of the Dead Sea, up the ascent from the Ghor, along the 'Arabah, to the south of the 'Azázimeh mountains, turning to Gadís round the south-east of that mountain plateau, from the west of which it shall extend (taking in all the fertile valleys at the foot) as far as Wády el 'Arísh (the river of Egypt), running northwards to the Mediterranean.

This definition of the southern border of the Holy Land is in strict accordance with the natural geographical limits of the country; but the words of Moses are perfectly unintelligible upon any other theory of the sites of Kadesh and the Wilderness of Zin.

We cannot perhaps ever hope to identify all the stations and localities mentioned in the Bible account of the Exodus, but enough has been recovered to enable us to trace the more important lines of march, and to follow the Israelites in their several journeys from Egypt to Sinai, from Sinai to Kadesh, and from thence to the Promised Land.

My task is drawing to a close; I have endeavoured to record the impressions which a sojourn among the scenes of the Exodus has left upon my own mind, and by thus depicting the country in its physical aspect, to promote a more intelligent study of this most interesting portion of the sacred narrative. The truth of that narrative has been of late years continually called in question; but I have purposely abstained from discussing any of these objections because I believe that geographical facts form the best answer to them all.

There is an unhappy tendency in the present day to consider science and modern discovery as antagonistic to Scripture truth; and against this pernicious notion I would now protest, for truth was never known to suffer from honest enquiry. Something there must always be that requires more than material proof, that can be grasped by faith alone; but he who investigates fearlessly and reverently will be thankful for the light which science sheds, and not despair if she leaves something unrevealed.

APPENDIX.

A. See p. 7.

VENIMUS itaque in Pharan civitatem, in qua pugnavit Moyses cum Amalech, ubi est oratorium cujus altare positum est super lapides illos quos subposuerunt Moyse orante. In ipso loco est civitas munita muris e lateribus et locus valde sterilis præter[*] aquas. Ibi occurrerunt nobis mulieres cum infantibus, palmas in manibus portantes et ampullas cum rosaceo[†] oleo; prostratæ pedibus nostris plantas ungebant et capita nostra, lingua Ægyptiaca psallantes antiphonam, Benedicti vos a domino benedictusque adventus vester, Hosanna in Excelsis. Ipsa terra est Madianitarum et habitantes in ipsa civitate: dicitur quia ex familia Jethro, soceri Moysis descendunt. 80 condomæ[‡] militantes in publico cum uxoribus suis erant, annonam et ves-

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[*] The common reading is *propter*. As the valley is anything but barren, Tuch (*Antoninus Martyr, seine Zeit und seine Pilgerfahrt nach dem Morgenlande*, Leipzig, 1864, 4to. p. 37) proposes to read "fertilis" for "sterilis," fruitful because of the waters. But it is plain ("totum arenis constat") that the traveller speaks of it as barren.

[†] Tuch as before reads with the MSS. *raphanino*, radish-oil, of which Pliny, 23. 49, speaks, and says, 19. 26, that it was made of the seed.

[‡] *Condomæ.* See Muratori in Ducange ed. Henschel, s.v. condamina "viri et feminæ servilis condicionis in una domo ac prædio, sibi ad excolendum traditis habitantes et conviventes."

tes accipientes ex Ægypto et nullum laborem habentes, quia nec habent, ubi (solum colant) eo quod totum arenis (constat); et præter singulos dies* singulas equas Saracenas (per) capita paleas et hordeum de publice accipientes (et) discurrentes cum ipsis per eremum pro custodia monasteriorum et eremitarum propter insidias Saracenorum. Ante quorum timorem non exagitantur Saraceni; nam exeuntes de ipsa civitate, fontem illi serrant et clavem tollunt secum : et illi quidem ab intus similiter faciunt propter insidias Saracenorum quia nec habent, ubi exeant foris, præter cœlum et arenam.

Extract from *De locis sanctis quæ perambulavit Antoninus Martyr*, mit Bemerkungen; herausgegeben von T. T. Tobler. 1863.

TRANSLATION.

So we came to the city of Pharan where Moses fought with Amalek, where is an oratory, whose altar is set on those stones which, while Moses was praying, they put under [him]. In the very place is the city, fortified with walls of brick, and a place very barren except the waters†. There women with children met us, bearing palms in their hands and flasks with oil of roses; falling down at our feet, they anointed our feet and our heads, singing in the Egyptian tongue the Anthem "Blessed are ye of the Lord, and blessed your coming, Hosanna in the highest!" The land itself belongs to the Midianites and the dwellers in the city itself are Midianites: it is said that they are descended from the family of Jethro, father-in-law of Moses. There were 80 serfs serving as soldiers on the public account, with their wives, receiving provision and clothing from Egypt, and doing no (agricultural) work, because they have no place where to till the ground, as it wholly consists of sand; and daily they have each a Saracèn mare receiving from the public store chaff and barley, man by man scouring with them through the desert, to guard the monasteries and hermits, because of the treacherous attacks of the Saracens. The Saracens are not scared before the fear of them; for going forth from the very city they bar the well and carry the keys away with them; yes, and they (the Christians) from within do the like, owing to the treacherous attacks of the Saracens, having no place to go abroad except the heaven and the sand.

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* *Præter singulos dies* makes no sense: read "per" for "præter."

† *i.e.* except in the neighbourhood of the wells.

[This passage has been often misquoted and wrongly translated: for the present rendering I am indebted to the Rev. J. E. B. Mayor, Fellow of St John's College.]

B. See page 51.

The tribe of Thamúd are said by the Mohammedan authorities to have inhabited Hejer, a town "situated between Madínah and Syria;" the prophet Sáleh himself they believe to have fled to Palestine and to be buried in a cave in the "White Mosque" at Ramleh. This, it is true, may appear adverse to my theory which identifies the people of Thamúd with the ancient inhabitants of Sinai; on the other hand, these geographical notices are not in the text of the Corăn, and the Sinai legend corresponds so remarkably with that given by Mohammed as to justify the presumption that they are at least intimately connected. The story is related at length in the notes to Sale's Corăn, Chap. vii.

C. See p. 278.

THE MOHAMMEDAN HISTORY OF THE EXODUS.

Value of the Mohammedan Account.—Personal History of Pharaoh.—Prosperity of Egypt under his rule. –He marries Asia.—His death predicted at the hands of "A Prophet of the sons of Israel."—Puts to death all the Hebrew male children.—Birth of Moses.—Exposure of Moses on the Nile.—Finding of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter.—His infancy.—Slays the Egyptian.—Flees to Midian.—Marries Jethro's daughter.—Story of the Burning Bush.—Returns to Egypt and meets with Aaron.—Goes before Pharaoh.—Works signs and wonders.—Trial of the Magicians.—Pharaoh defies the God of Moses.—The Plagues of Egypt.—Murder of Asia.—Repentance and subsequent backsliding of Pharaoh.—He signs his own Death-warrant.—The Exodus and Passage of the Red Sea.—The Israelites reach Mount Sinai.—The Golden Calf.—Delivery of the Law.—Moses desires to see God.—The Israelites are *commanded to slay every man his neighbour.—Approach to the Promised Land, and sending out of the Spies.—The Forty Years' Wandering.—Murmurings in the Wilderness.—Taking of Jericho.—Rebellion of Cárún (Korah).—Death of Aaron.—Death of Moses.—(Final note) Tomb of Moses.*

THE history of the Exodus as current throughout the Mohammedan world forms an appropriate sequel to the Bedawín legends of Sinai; for, although much of it is evidently a mere distorted version of the Scriptural narrative, and much is based on Jewish tradition, there is still a great deal taken from the legends current in Arabia before the Mohammedan era, and gathered by Mohammed himself during his sojourn in Sinai.

The Jewish portion is also in itself extremely interesting, for it is not the Talmudic fable of Jerusalem, but the folk-lore of the Jews of the desert, the Kheibarí tribe of Mecca and Medínah, whose identity with the descendants of the ancient Rechabites (Jeremiah xxxv. 2) has been satisfactorily established by Dr Wolff and other learned travellers.

The following legends are taken from the commentaries on the Corán and other authentic Arabic sources, where they are of course treated in a grave and solemn style; but they savour too much of the ludicrous to warrant me in clothing them in the same grandiloquent language which an orthodox Mohammedan would naturally use when speaking of such subjects. If, therefore, my rendering may at times appear somewhat flippant, I trust that the reader will ascribe this to its true cause, viz., an inability on my part to deal too gravely with a humorous theme, even when the humour is rather accidental than purposely introduced. At the same time, I reiterate my opinion that the story has a strong claim upon our interest from an ethnical and antiquarian point of view, and I believe with Horace that it is still possible to "learn while we laugh."

The Pharaoh of Egypt, by whom the Children of Israel were persecuted, is called by the Muslim historians, Walíd Ibn Masáb. According to some accounts, he was a bankrupt chemist from Persia, who fled to Egypt, and by a stratagem gained the confidence of the reigning Pharaoh, and became his prime minister. Giving himself out as a necromancer, he passed whole days and nights performing incantations amongst the tombs, and by this means attracted the attention of the king, whom he ultimately succeeded upon the throne. Under his rule, which was just and vigorous, and protracted to a miraculous length, the power and resources of the country were immensely developed. As an instance of his sound and equitable administration, they relate that his vizier Hámán, being employed to construct the Serdús canal, was solicited by the people of the neighbouring villages to bring the water up to their doors; this he consented to do on consideration of receiving a bribe from each district, and thus rendered the canal the most tortuous in the whole kingdom. When these facts were made known to Pharaoh, he compelled his minister to disgorge the bribes which he had received, and severely reproved him for his cupidity. The revenue of Egypt in his reign is said to have amounted to upwards of seventy-two million *dínars* annually. Of this sum he retained a fourth for his own use and the expenses of his court; a fourth was employed in strengthening the military defences of the country; and a fourth was spent in improving the land, constructing and repairing bridges and canals, and in other public works; the remaining fourth was buried, each village receiving back a sum proportionate to the whole of the taxes levied upon it, and the amount so disposed of was allowed to accumulate from year to year until some pressing need or dire calamity should overtake the district. Every year at seed-time he appointed two officers to travel through the country and inspect the farms. Each of these commissioners took with him a bushel of wheat, and, if he found a piece of uncultivated ground sufficiently large to grow this quantity, he sowed it therein, and reported the case to Pharaoh, by whom the negligent owner of the soil was at once beheaded. So great was the fertility of Egypt in his day, and so strict the system by which cultivation was enforced, that the commissioners frequently returned without having found a spot on which to dispose of their grain.

But Pharaoh's wisdom, authority, and unusual longevity so infatuated him with pride that he rebelled against God, and claimed divine honours, thus bringing down upon himself those dreadful judgments which afterwards overtook him, and his people who had flattered and supported him in his impious and preposterous pretensions.

He married Asia, a woman of such extraordinary beauty and goodness that the following legend is told of her:—"When God created the Houris of Paradise, the angels, marvelling at their wondrous fairness, cried, 'Oh Lord our God! hast thou ever fashioned lovelier forms than these?'; and there came a voice from the height of heights, which said, 'Yea, I have created Asia and Mary and Fátimah.'"

This Asia he espoused, in spite of her own and her father's remonstrances, and, as he entered her apartment for the first time after the ceremony, he heard an invisible monitor, warning him of his approaching end, and of the overthrow of his dominion by the hands of a prophet from among the sons of Israel. This awful intimation, being followed by sundry dreams of strange and threatening import, so filled his mind with dread that he drew unto him his wisest ministers and took counsel with them how he might avert his fate. By their advice he set a guard over all the Israelitish women, and commanded that every man-child born amongst the Jews should be straightway put to death. He, moreover, forbade all his relations and officers from marriage or from consorting with their wives, for the wise men had declared that the child who was to be his doom should be born of his own immediate kin, and in his own palace.

Now 'Imrán (Amram) was a near relative and companion of Pharaoh, and as he sat by the king's side one day, to guard him while he slept, lo! 'Imrán's wife stood before him, for the angel Gabriel had brought her thither, and the tyrant's precautions were of none effect before the high decrees of fate.

So 'Imrán's wife conceived and bare a son, but the mother's joy was turned to sadness at the knowledge that Pharaoh's executioners would soon tear him from her arms. As she lay, sadly weeping at this thought, the newborn babe rose up into a sitting posture, and exclaimed with a firm voice, "Mother, fear not, neither grieve, for God is with us," and then she knew that her son was the prophet who should wreak the vengeance of Heaven upon the impious king.

And Pharaoh was startled from his sleep that night by strange portents, and mysterious voices rang in his ear, which cried, "Moses is born and Pharaoh's doom draws nigh;" then, filled with rage and terror, he sent his soldiery to search for and destroy the child.

Now it fell out that, as they were seeking through the land, Moses' mother, being obliged to leave the room in which her infant lay, concealed him in the oven, and Moses' sister, unaware of the fact, came in and kindled a fire beneath it, that she might bake some bread which she had just prepared. At the moment when the fire was at its fiercest heat, the minions of Pharaoh entered the house, and carefully searched each nook and cranny without finding Moses, for, as the fire was kindled beneath the oven, they deemed it useless to examine there. No sooner had they gone than Moses' mother returned, and seeing the oven heated tore her hair and beat her breasts, upbraiding his sister as the cause of her misfortune.

Rushing to the spot, to gaze upon her roasted darling, she was surprised to find him alive and well, and at his command inserted her hand with some diffidence into the heated oven, and drew him forth without a scorch.

Fire having no effect upon her strange infant, the mother concluded that she might with equal safety entrust him to the water. She therefore prepared a little ark or chest, and having anointed him with unguents, tinged his fingers with henna, and smeared his eyes with *kohl*, she placed Moses in the ark, shut down the lid, and committed him to the mercy of the Nile. For three days, some say forty, the tiny bark drifted about among the bulrushes, and was carried at last through a branch canal into a tank in the very midst of Pharaoh's palace.

Pharaoh had seven daughters, each one afflicted with divers grievous diseases. When the ark arrived, the eldest damsel was bathing in the tank, and with a woman's curiosity dragged it ashore and opened it to examine the contents. What was her amazement to find a Hebrew child, his countenance beaming like the sun, and smiling upon her with a look of intelligence quite preternatural in one so young. She pressed him to her bosom, and lo! more wonders! all her chronic ailments left her in a moment. Her second sister, to whom she carried him, derived the same benefit from his touch, and by the time that he had gone the round of the seven young ladies they were all permanently cured. The foundling was soon carried in to Asia, and by her presented to her husband Pharaoh, who, on hearing the story, regarded him with some misgivings, and expressed an intention of putting him to death. Asia, however, persuaded him to forego this satisfaction and adopt Moses as his son, having no male children of his own.

Moses, thus installed as the heir-apparent of the throne of Egypt, was treated with all possible care and attention, but, although the best wet-nurses in the country were provided for him, he could not be induced to take the breast, until his own mother was engaged to fill the office; she nourished him for the space of a whole year.

When Moses reached the age of three years, Pharaoh sent for him, and, captivated by his pretty childish ways, set him upon his knee to play. Moses immediately seized him by the beard with one hand, and soundly boxed his ears with the other, at which sign of decided animosity all his old suspicions were revived, and he again determined upon putting him to death. This intention the good Asia quickly divined, and excused the child's conduct on the score of infantile thoughtlessness and foolishness. "I will soon convince you," said she, "that the boy is incapable of judging between right and wrong;" and, ordering a silver basin to be brought, containing a date and a live ember, she set them before Moses and commanded him to choose. As he was about to select the date, the angel Gabriel appeared before him, struck his hand upon the coal, and made him carry it to his mouth, burning his tongue severely, and causing him to utter most natural and dreadful howls. Pharaoh was convinced that the boy was a fool, and from that hour Moses lisped in his speech.

Moses grew up in great honour with Pharaoh until he reached the age of forty years, but during all this time his Hebrew fellow-countrymen suffered more and more oppression at the hands of the Egyptians. One day, as he entered the town unawares, he beheld an Egyptian disputing with an Israelite, and, the latter having called upon him for aid, he smote the Egyptian and slew him.

Repenting of this rash act, and dreading the inevitable blood-feud, he fled into the desert, and took the road to Midian. On the eighth day, hungry and thirsty, he approached the city, and sat down by a well, at which a party of Midianites were watering their flocks. Amongst them Moses noticed two women, who were keeping their sheep back from the well, and preventing them from drinking until the rest had all retired. In answer to Moses' enquiry, they explained that they were the daughters of Sho'eib*, the prophet of Midian; and that, since their father was old and blind, the young men of the tribe took advantage of their unprotected position, and would not let their flocks draw nigh to the well till they themselves had watered theirs.

Now the shepherds, when they had finished watering the flocks, rolled a great stone over the mouth of the well, that Sho'eib's two daughters should not share in the use of the water, and Moses, seeing this, became wroth, and, weak as he was, gave the huge boulder such a kick with his foot as sent it flying full forty cubits from the spot, and Sho'eib's daughters watered their sheep. The two girls reported this act of politeness to their father, who at once sent them to invite the stranger to his house. Moses' strength and probity so pleased Sho'eib that he married him to his eldest daugher Safúra, on condition of his serving him for eight or ten years.

When the term was fulfilled, Moses desired once more to look upon his own people, and to Sho'eib's great grief set out from the land of Midian with his wife, and turned his face again in the direction of Egypt.

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* Sho'eib, as the Arabs call Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, is said to have been blind, notwithstanding which infirmity he was divinely commissioned to preach the true religion lately revealed unto Abraham, and to convert the people of his native city Midian. They rejected his doctrine and mocked the blind prophet, for which sin they were destroyed by fire from heaven, while Midian was laid waste by an earthquake, Jethro alone escaping alive. He fled to Palestine, and is said to be buried near Safed.

Moses journeyed on, and pitched his tent in "the Wâdy," where his wife was taken suddenly with the pains of labour, and he desired to light for her a fire; but the snow and rain fell apace, and the wet fuel would not blaze. Then Moses lifted up his eyes and espied a fire afar off, and said unto his family, "'Tarry ye here, for I perceive a fire; peradventure, I may bring you a brand thereout, or may find a guidance in the fire.' And when he was come near unto it a voice cried unto him, saying, 'Oh, Moses, I am thy Lord, wherefore put off the shoes from thy feet, for thou art in the Holy Wâdy of Towá. And I have chosen thee, therefore give ear unto that which is revealed. I am thy God, there is none other God but me. Me shalt thou worship, and in remembering Me shalt thou perform thy prayer. . . . Now what is that, oh, Moses, in thy right hand?' He answered and said, 'It is my rod, whereon I lean, and with which I beat down leaves for my flock*; and other uses, too, have I therein.' God spake unto him, saying, 'Cast it down, oh, Moses,' and he cast it down; and lo, it became a serpent which glided about. God said, 'Take hold on it, and fear not, we will restore it to its pristine state. And put thy right hand under thy left arm, it shall come forth white without any hurt†; this shall be unto thee another sign . . . And go thou unto Pharaoh, for he is exceeding impious.' Moses answered the Lord, and said, 'Lord, expand my breast, and make thy commands easy unto me, and loose the knot of my tongue, that men may understand my speech. And give me a councillor of mine own people, Aaron my brother. Gird up my loins by him, and make him my colleague in this affair.' God said, 'Oh Moses, thou hast thy request‡.'"

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* Compare the remarks upon the mutilation of the acacia trees to furnish food for the flocks and herds, p. 166.

† *i.e.* white, but not from leprosy.

‡ The passage within inverted commas is translated literally from the Corân, chap. xx. vv. 9—36.

And the angel of the Lord revealed unto Aaron that his brother Moses was nigh unto the land of Egypt, and carried him out to the city gates, guiding him through the darkness of night unto the banks of the Nile, where the two brothers met and embraced.

Then Moses went up to the palace of Pharaoh and presented himself at the door, and some of the officers of the court recognised him, but others knew him not. And as for Hámán, the chief vizier, he laid hands upon Moses and cast him into prison.

When Pharaoh heard what was done he was sore afraid, and his joints trembled, but he sent for Moses before him and asked him, "Who art thou?" Moses answered, "I am the servant of the Most High God, and His apostle, and one with whom He hath deigned to speak." "Thou art my slave," said Pharaoh, "and the son of my handmaid." Moses answered him, saying, "Nay, but I am sent to require of thee a certain thing, namely, that thou shouldest confess, and say, 'There is no God but God, and Moses is the prophet of God.'" Now Aaron was one of Pharaoh's ministers, and he sat at the king's right hand. But when Moses spake these words Aaron came down from off the throne and bare testimony to the truth of his brother's mission, and demanded of the king that he should send the Beni Israel with them out of the land.

Then Pharaoh's wrath waxed exceeding hot, and he commanded that they should strip off Aaron's robes of state, and they did so; but the angel Gabriel descended and clothed him with a garment of Paradise, and Pharaoh marvelled greatly, and commanded Hámán, his vizier, to take them to his house and endeavour by kind treatment to cajole them into returning to their allegiance. Proving unsuccessful in this, Pharaoh sent for them both before him, and taxed Moses with ingratitude to him who had brought up and educated him, and conferred so many benefits upon him. "These benefits of thine," said Moses, "have cost me full dear, for thou hast enslaved and despitefully used my countrymen, the Children of Israel, and slain their sons and put their daughters to shame." Now Pharaoh was reclining on his couch, but at these words he rose up into a sitting position, and demanded of Moses, "Who is this Lord of the Universe whose prophet thou pretendest that thou art? Unless thou confessest that there is no God but me, Pharaoh, I will punish thee with a grievous punishment, or unless thou bringest me an evident sign." Hereupon the rod in Moses' hand quivered, and Moses at the command of the angel Gabriel threw it down, when it became a monstrous serpent, which commenced throwing down the walls of the palace and breathing flames into the houses and treasuries; it reared up its head like a camel, and hissed with a noise like thunder, so that all fled from before it; and Pharaoh started up from off his seat, and hid himself behind the throne. But the dragon came nearer and nearer to him, and seized upon the skirts of his garment, whereat Pharaoh, half dead with fear, shrieked out, "Oh Moses, for the sake of those who reared thee, for the sake of Asia, save me from this dreadful beast." When Moses heard the beloved name of Asia, he called the snake, and it came to him like a dog to his master; then he took hold of it by the tongue, and it became again a rod in his hand.

But, when the danger was gone by, Pharaoh's hardness of heart returned, and he demanded another sign. So Moses thrust his hand into his breast, and when he pulled it forth again it was of a brilliant whiteness, and when he returned it again to his bosom it resumed its former hue.

But Pharaoh declared that Moses had done these things by the power of sorcery, and ordered that all the magicians in his kingdom should be assembled together, and use their arts to overcome Moses.

And it was done accordingly, and 70,000 magicians were collected in a broad wády to try their skill against the prophet and his brother Aaron; and Pharaoh sat on an eminence overlooking the scene, and the people of Egypt were ranged in order, and covered the entire hill-side.

Now the magicians had prepared 300 mule-loads of ropes and sticks, and had so enchanted the eyes of the spectators that, when they threw them down in the valley, they appeared like living and writhing snakes. But Moses dissipated the illusion, and his rod when thrown down devoured all the rest, so that even the sorcerers themselves believed; and Pharaoh was exceeding wroth, and said, "Verily he is the great sorcerer who has taught you all, but ye shall suffer for this."

Then the impious king waxed more and more perverse, and ordered a huge tower to be built, the stones thereof being for the first time set with mortar (of which he was the inventor); and he said, "I will ascend to heaven, and defy this God of Moses." Having completed the work, and mounted to the top of the tower, which had reached an immense height, he shot an arrow into the sky, and this arrow, falling again at his feet, covered with blood, hastened his destruction by confirming him in his folly and pride, for he said, "I have slain the God of Moses."

Then God sent grievous plagues upon Egypt; first, the rain was cut off from the land and the crops failed; their cattle were smitten with blains and died; their buildings fell in ruins; a flood came, and deluged the land for eight days and nights; locusts swarmed, and ate up all their substance; lice covered the face of the earth and filled their garments. Frogs came in countless myriads; and this was the most grievous plague of all, for they filled their very food. Then God commanded Moses to strike the Nile with his staff, and the waters thereof turned into blood, and the people perished with thirst; and it fell out that, when an Israelite and an Egyptian came to one place to draw water, the stream was pure and limpid for the former, but the latter could get nothing but clotted gore. And between each plague there was an interval of forty days.

Then Moses cursed the Egyptians, and Aaron said Amen to his denunciations, and the Lord transformed many of their men and women and children into stones. And when Asia saw these misfortunes she came before Pharaoh, and upbraided him with being the cause, and he, being angry, slew her. At this a fresh trouble came upon the land, and darkness covered the face thereof, so that the Egyptians knew not day from night. Then the waters of the Nile ceased to flow, and the people murmured against Pharaoh, and he went out with them, if peradventure he might make the stream to flow. But when they drew nigh unto it the water receded from them, and no man might quench his thirst. Then Pharaoh went apart, and prostrated himself upon the earth, and humbled himself before the Lord, and, confessing his iniquity, prayed that the people might not suffer for his sake, and that they might again have water to drink. So the Lord hearkened unto his prayer, and the waters flowed in their accustomed channel. And when Pharaoh saw this miracle his heart was hardened, and he pretended that it was he who had restored the river to its bed; and the people threw themselves down in adoration before him, and called him God and Lord, so that his unbelief and wickedness were greater than ever. But the time of his punishment and doom was drawing nigh; and the angel Gabriel appeared before him one day, in the likeness of a goodly youth, and said, "I am one of the servants of my Lord the King, and I desire his sentence on a servant of mine own. For I have heaped benefits upon him, and he hath rebelled against me, and denieth my right over him, and layeth claim to my name and power;" and Pharaoh answered, "Let him be drowned in the sea." And he gave a warrant under his own hand and seal that this should be done, and the angel departed from him.

Then Moses, by the command of God, called together the Children of Israel, and they went out with him, six hundred thousand souls, into the wilderness. And Pharaoh, imagining that they fled for fear of him, followed them with a mighty host, and came near to them by the coast of the Red Sea. Then the people feared greatly, and cried out to Moses, saying, "We are undone, for Pharaoh and his hosts are pressing close upon us, and the sea is before us, and the sword behind." Moses answered, "Fear not, for the Lord is with us and will guide us."

Then the Lord commanded Moses, and he smote the sea with his rod, and the waters divided asunder like a great heap on either side, and there appeared twelve paths in the midst of the sea, so that the twelve tribes of Israel passed over on dry land.

And, when Pharaoh and Hámán his vizier saw this, they essayed to follow the Israelites; but the horse upon which the king rode drew back, and would not cross until the angel Gabriel appeared, mounted upon a charger, and led the way. When the hosts of the Egyptians had reached the middle of the sea, Gabriel approached the king, and drew forth the warrant which he had himself before signed and sealed; and Pharaoh, having read it, knew that his doom had come, and would fain have repented and acknowledged that there was no God but the God of Israel; but it was too late, the waters closed in upon Pharaoh and his horses, and his chariots, and all the hosts of the Egyptians.

The Children of Israel would not believe that Pharaoh was dead, and continued exceedingly afraid. Wherefore the Lord commanded the sea, and it threw Pharaoh's body out from its depths, and cast it upon the shore; and since that day the sea never receives a corpse but it throws it out upon the shore.

So the Children of Israel journeyed on to the Mount (Tor); and then Moses gave his brother Aaron charge over them, and went up unto the place where God had before spoken with him, and passed his time in fasting and prayer and praise.

But the people were greatly addicted to the sin of idolatry, and, when Moses had withdrawn himself from them, they clamoured, saying, "Make for us gods, even such as these nations have through whose midst we have passed." And a certain man named Es Sámarí hearkened unto their request, and took their ornaments of gold and cast them into the fire, and out of the molten metal he fashioned a calf. Now this Es Sámarí had with him a handful of sand, which he had taken from the seashore, from beneath the hoof of the angel Gabriel's horse; and he threw this into the belly of the calf, and straightway the calf began to low. And he said unto the Children of Israel, "Behold your God." And Aaron, when he heard it, was exceeding wroth, and called them to the worship of the Lord; but they answered, "We will not fall down and worship Him until Moses return unto us."

Now Moses had gone up into the mount, and the angel Gabriel bore him to the spot where the Lord had spoken to him aforetime. And Moses heard the sound of the creative Pen writing on the tablets of green emerald. The Voice cried, "Write;" and the Pen said, "Oh, Lord, what shall I write?" God answered, "I am the Lord thy God, there is none other God but me. Me shalt thou serve, and thou shalt not associate with me aught beside, for whoso doeth this he shall surely enter the fire of hell. Oh Moses, thou shalt not steal thy neighbour's goods, lest my wrath descend upon thee." Other commandments also did the Pen of God write on the Mount.

And, while the people were yet before the Mount, the Lord ordered Moses to cut out tablets from the living rock; and he did so. And the cloud overshadowed the mountain, and God wrote on the tablets the whole Book of the Law with His own hand of power. Moses heard the running of the pen upon the tablets, and his soul yearned to look upon God. But God said, "Thou hast asked a thing that no one of my creatures hath ever asked before; how canst thou bear to look upon me, when the highest of my creatures, if he should look upon me, falleth down smitten as with a thunderclap." Moses answered, "Rather would I die than not look upon Thy face, oh Lord!" Then God said, "Behold the mountain; if it shall remain steadfast before me, thou too mayest look upon me." And the Lord revealed himself to the mountain, and it shivered into a thousand fragments*, and Moses fell senseless on the ground as though a thunderclap had smitten him.

And when Moses came down from the mount, and found how the people had been led astray to the worship of the calf, he threw down the tablets of the law, and came unto his brother Aaron, and caught him by the beard, and would have beaten him, but that Aaron besought him to stay his hand, saying that the people had compelled him to silence under pain of death. And when he heard that it was Es Sâmarí who had made the Children of Israel to sin, he came to him, and would have killed him; but God said, "Slay him not, only put him forth out of thy host."

And Moses took up a large stone and smote the calf withal until it was ground to powder, and threw it into the stream. Then the Children of Israel repented, and asked Moses to pray to the Lord on their behalf, saying, "Verily, if He require us to slay ourselves, we will obey Him."

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* See p. 115 n.

And the Lord commanded them to slay each man his neighbour and his kinsman. And there came a great darkness over the host of Israel, and every man slew his neighbour, and knew not who it was that he had slain; but the weapons were of no avail against such as had not worshipped the calf.

But they returned afterwards to their sinful ways, and forgot the Lord their God, and worshipped idols, and rejected the Book of the Law. So the Lord sent down the angel Gabriel unto them, who raised the mountain above their heads, and shook it over them so that they thought that it would fall upon them, and their death was sure; whereupon they confessed their sins and agreed to accept the Law.

Then the Children of Israel murmured against Moses, and said, "Shew us God, for we would see him plainly." And Moses chose seventy men, and went up with them into the mountain; and a voice came unto them from heaven, and they were smitten as with a thunderclap and fell down dead. But Moses grieved over them and besought the Lord to restore them again to life, and it was so; and they returned to tell the people of the wondrous signs that had been shewn them.

Then God commanded them to march onward towards the Holy Land, and to destroy the race of the giants; and He rained down upon them manna and quails, and caused sweet water to gush out of the stony rocks for their use, and neither their clothes nor their shoes waxed old. And, when they were come to Jericho, Moses chose twelve men to go up and spy the land; but, when they were entered into Jericho, the giants seized upon them, and mocked them for the weakness of their bodies, and would have killed them, but they turned and fled out of their hands. And, when they were come unto the camp of the Children of Israel, they reported what manner of men they were which inhabited Jericho, and they filled the hearts of the people with terror, so that they would not go up and fight against the giants, for they said, "It were better for us to have died in Egypt under the hand of Pharaoh." And

Moses prayed to God, and the spies were punished with sudden death, save only Joshua and Caleb, for they had not reported the affair. And, when Israel would not go up to fight against the giants, the Lord punished them by condemning them to wander in the wilderness for forty years, so that not one of those who had come out from Egypt entered the Promised Land, but only their children who were born in the wilderness. And it so happened that, if a man amongst them who had rebelled against God and against Moses strayed away from his fellows, he found not his way again, but died of hunger in the desert; but, if a true believer strayed, he returned again to the host.

Then the Children of Israel murmured against Moses, and said, "We cannot endure one kind of meat:" and they loathed the manna and the quails, and longed after the vegetables of Egypt, its garlic and its cucumbers and its leeks. And God smote them with a terrible pestilence.

And when the forty years were expired, Moses led the Children of Israel against the city of Jericho; and they conquered it, and drove out the race of giants, and destroyed them from off the face of the earth. And they took the city of Belka and carried away the king thereof captive.

Moses had a cousin named Cárún, an exceedingly poor man, and he learnt the art of alchemy from Kolthúm, Moses' sister, so that he acquired great riches thereby. And the keys of his treasury alone were carried upon forty mules; and he built him a house, and made the doors thereof and the roof thereof of fine gold, and was puffed up with pride at the multitude of his riches, and rebelled against Moses, taunting him with his poor estate. And Moses waxed wroth, and prayed the Lord against him, and the earth opened and swallowed up Cárún and all his company.

Now the death of Aaron was on this wise. When the hosts of Israel came to Mount Hor, Moses and Aaron ascended the mountain and found therein many caves, and from one of them there came forth a shining light. So they entered in, and beheld a golden throne covered over with rich carpets, and upon the throne was written, "This throne is for him whose stature it shall suit." And Moses laid himself down upon it, but he came short of it in length. Then Aaron laid down thereon, and, lo! it was made according to his stature. And the Angel of Death entered the cave, and, having saluted them, told them that he was come to receive Aaron's soul; and Aaron bade farewell to his brother Moses, and laid himself down upon the throne and died.

But, when the Children of Israel heard of the death of Aaron, they were sorely grieved, and they murmured against Moses, saying, "Thou hast slain Aaron thy brother." Then Moses prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord caused the angels to bring Aaron's body forth from out of the cave, and the people saw it laid out upon the golden throne, and they acquitted Moses of his death, and mourned for Aaron many days.

And, when the time of Moses' departure drew nigh, the Angel of Death came unto him and demanded his soul. But Moses was wroth, and smote the Angel of Death upon his face, so that his eye was torn out. Then the angel returned unto the Lord, and the Lord restored his eye to him again, and bade him go unto Moses and command him to place his hand on the back of a bull, and to say unto him, "As many hairs as thy hand covereth, so many years shall thy life be prolonged." And the angel did as he was commanded, and said unto Moses, "As many hairs as thy hand covereth, so many years shall thy life be prolonged." Moses said, "And what then?" "Then," said the angel, "thou must die." And Moses bowed his head and said, "Nay, Lord, but rather let me die now." And he besought God that he might approach to the Holy Land by the distance of a stone's throw, and the Lord answered his prayer.

So Moses died, and the Children of Israel mourned greatly for their leader, but no man knew where his tomb might be, for the Lord had concealed it from their eyes.

[The "Tomb of Moses," so called, to the east of Jerusalem and on the road to Jericho, was built by the Sultán Beybars, on his return from a pilgrimage to Mecca in the year of the Hijrah 668. The only authority for the authenticity of the site appears to be a saying of Mohammed, that he stayed to pray at

Moses' tomb, by the Red Hill to the east of Jerusalem, on the night of his pretended journey to heaven; on which occasion also he declared that he had visited the temple at Jerusalem. The tomb is still yearly visited by Moslem pilgrims, and many wonderful signs are said to take place there, proving that it is in reality the tomb of the Hebrew lawgiver.]

D. see p. 423.

List of Metropolitan, Archiepiscopal and Episcopal towns in the See of the Holy City of Jerusalem. (From a manuscript in the library of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.)

By the 5th Œcumenical Council, in the reign of the most august king Justinian, A.D. 534, Jerusalem was ranked as a Patriarchate forasmuch as it is the city of the great King, Christ the true Son of our God. Before this time it was a Bishopric subject to the See of Cæsarea of Palestine; but by unanimous vote of the Council the following places were made dependencies of Jerusalem: from the Patriarchate of Alexandria the two metropolitan sees, viz. Bostra of Arabia and the Province of Petras and six bishoprics, Gaza, Askalon, Eleutherupolis, Ælia and Mount Sinai and Anthedon, putting the boundary at the Red Sea: from that of Antioch also two metropolitan sees, viz. Cæsarea of Palestine and Scythopolis and one bishopric from the metropolitan see of Tyre, viz. Porphyropolis which is now called Caifa, putting its boundary at the river between Ptolemais and Mount Carmel as far as Zabulon; from the Metropolitan see of Bostra of Ausitis, four bishoprics, viz. Gadera, Capitolias, Abilla and Gaba; and they assigned for its boundary Ausitis, the country of Job.

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF THE PROVINCE OF PALESTINE.

Ælia, Jerusalem, the Holy City, the Patriarchal seat, which has four metropolitans and twenty-five archbishops.

First: the metropolitan of metropolitans at Cæsarea of Palestine. His boundary is from the river which divides Ptolemais and Mount Carmel as far as Bdellopotamus, which is the beginning of the diocese of Joppa. The bishoprics under Cæsarea are: Dora, Antipatris, Porphyrupolis, Diospolis, Jamnea, Neapolis, Onnusozusa, Joppa, Askalon, Gaza, Raphia, Anthedon, Diocletianopolis, Eleutherupolis, Neapolis, Sebaste, Regeon-Apathus, Regeon-Jericho, Regeon-Libiæ, Regeon-Daron, Azotus-Paralus, Azotus, Hippenus, Eukomazon-eutylæ, Tricomia, Toxus, Salton Constantianicus, Salton Geraiticus, and the monastery of St Elias on Carmel.

The province of Palæstina Secunda.

Second: Scythopolis or Bethshean; This has its boundary as far as the land of Ausitis and as far as Zabulon and the land of Galilee. The bishoprics under Scythopolis are: Pellæ, Gadara, Capitolia, Abila, Maximianupolis, Diocæsarea, Tiberias, Gabæ, Elenupolis, Hippos, Tetrakomia, Clima-gaulanæ, the village of Nais, Epheca and Nes.

The province of Palæstina Tertia.

Third: Petra; Its boundary extends on the south as far as the river Chise or Chosa, and on the south (? north) as far as the river Mojib. This river divides this metropolitan see from that of Bostron of Ausitis, the land of Ammon. The bishoprics subject to Petra are the following: Augustopolis, Arindela, Charagmucha, Areopolis, Mapsis, Elusa, Zoora, Birosabon, Helas, Pentakomia, Mamopsora, Mitrokomia and Salton or Salton-Hieraticæ.

The province of Palæstina Quarta.

Fourth: Bostron, or Arabia. This has very extensive boundaries. On the east, the Desert as far as the Torrent of Waters and Springs. On the south as far as the river Zarnarios or Zarcarios as far as the river Chosa; this it is which divides the see of Bostron from that of Petra as was before stated. The bishoprics subject to Bostron are as follows: Adrasus, Dia, Medaba, Gerassa, Neue, Philadelphia, Esbus, Neapolis or Hieretaru, Philippupolis, or Hierapolis, Phainutus, Constantina, Dionysia, Pentacomia, Tricomia, Kanothas, Salton, Cataneos, Hexacomia, Ennacomia, the villages of Gonia, Chairus, Stanæ, Machabera, Coratha, Belbanes, Capræ, Purgo-arata, Setna, Ariarchæ, Neota, Clima of the east and west, the village of Ariatha, Trachonus, and the village of Bebdamus or Bebmus. (These are extracted from the canonical and holy list upon parchment in the Great Library at Jerusalem, drawn up by the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, in the year of Adam 6391, written by Georgius Cyprius a Lapide. The following are also from the List.)

Arch-bishoprics :

1. Diospolis, or Lydda, or Hagiogeorgiopolis ; its borders extend on the east as far as the foot of the mountain, on the south as far as the Torrent of the Woodcutter and as far as the torrent which comes down to Castellium, and which is called Chulda. This torrent divides Diospolis and Emmaus, but on the north and west it has the diocese of Joppa.

2. Joppa; its boundary on the east extends as far as the great road running between Lydda and the mountain; and again from the same mountain as far as Rhantia ; and from Rhantia as far as Cala and Leia. On the south as far as the descent from Azotus to the sea ; Hippenus also and its neighbourhood belong to Joppa. On the north from the mountain as far as the Bdellopotamus, which is called Sioran, and Tharsus which is called Arsúf, and the country appertaining thereto. And the village of Kale and Leia, and the village of Tzelia, and the village of Kafarseph, and the village of Rantia, and the village of Zoonus and the rest of the country of the great road from Lydda to Kale and Leia belong to the same district.

3. Ascalon extends eastward as far as the mountain ; southward as far as the great torrent which divides Ascalon and Gaza ; on the north to the river Azotus; Azotus itself and two other forts also belong to this district.

4. Diocletianupolis includes all the surrounding country.

5. Gaza; its boundary on the north is the great torrent which divides Ascalon and Gaza ; on the south it extends as far as the Torrent of Trees. It has two other forts, Ason or Aysa and Abida, and two others on the east, namely, Chalasa and Cholus.

6. Anthedon, or Maïuma ; its boundary extends to the River of Fountains and the great torrent between this see and that of Ares. It is the most remote from Jerusalem of all the sees.

7. Eleutherupolis; this district extends to the mountain and the great torrent which comes down from St Abraham : to the same district belongs Catharocastrum which is situated upon the mountain and called Telesaphion or Telesaphy as well as the adjacent country.

8. Neapolis reaches from the city of this name to the

Jordan and as far as the torrent which divides it from Sebastia, and all the neighbourhood of Samaria and the monastery of the Saviour, or, of the Holy Well, where Christ our God sat down and asked for water to drink from the Samaritan woman.

9. Sebastia extends to the rugged mountain and the great torrent dividing this district from Cæsarea; Asprocastrum also and the adjacent county are comprised in the same district.

10. Hagia Trias (The Holy Trinity); otherwise, the holy River Jordan; includes all the country adjacent to the Jordan as far as Bethlehem and the great mountain which divides this district from Neapolis. It also has under it the city of Jericho; it is an old established custom that it should have its affairs superintended from the monasteries of the wilderness of Jordan. The bishop has also the office of Protosyncellus and of sitting opposite the Patriarch.

11. Tiberias extends as far as the great bridge and the great torrent which divides this district from that of Mount Tabor. It has under it also the monastery of the Holy Table.

12. Diocæsarea; this is above Gennasereth and comprises all that neighbourhood and the monastery of St Nicholas of Petra.

13. Maximianupolis; from the one torrent to the other, comprising all the immediate neighbourhood.

14. Nazareth; as far as the great torrent which separates it from Ptolemais, as far as Mount Tabor, inclusive of all the surrounding country. The great monastery of the Arch-Captain Gabriel is also under this diocese.

15. Mount Tabor comprises the mountain of that name and two monasteries, the one a bishopric and the other a hermitage. The monasteries beneath the mountain are however under the supervision of the Bishopric of Tabor.

16. Capitolias extends as far as the great mountain and on the left as far as the torrent which separates it from Zeni. It has also two districts, of which one is called Cossaen or Cossaer, and the other Duri or Dueir or Buer, and one village called Arabes or Arabeas.

17. Meron, or Meru. This district extends on the south as far as the torrent and on the east half way between this see and that of Ausitis and as far as the tower of Sylitus. Its neighbourhood abounds in olives and is very extensive.

18. Gadeiron, or Gadaron, is a little see on the east extending

as far as Petra and the great bridge and as far as the monastery of the Tithe.

19. Cyriacupolis; this diocese extends on the east as far as Moab, and as far as the great torrent which divides it from Petra, and as far as the river Chosa or Chise which is between Moab and Gabet.

20. Adria, or Dria; on the east this district extends as far as the river Zarnacios, and on the south as far as the great torrent which divides it from Eila.

21. Gadet, or Gabalon, includes all the surrounding country, and is very extensive.

22. Ailia, or Aila, is a country on the coast of the Red Sea, distant from Heroopolis about 150 miles more to the west (? east) than Mount Sinai, from which it is distant 60 miles. It has under it the monastery of the great Arsenius.

23. Pharan, or Cadis, is a village four stages distant from Malaathæ and twenty from Hebron; its diocese includes the surrounding country.

24. Mount Sinai is an Abbey and Bishopric situated in Arabia Petræa, or, as it is called, Palæstina Tertia. This was a bishopric even in the time of Justinian, as is plain from the third part of the acts of the Chalcedonian Council which was held in the year 451. Justinian built the monastery here in the year 530.

25. Helenupolis. These are the metropolitan sees with the Bishoprics under them and the archbishoprics subject to the Apostolic and Patriarchal see of Jerusalem. The monasteries outside the Holy City of Jerusalem are the following: The Cross, where the precious wood was cut; the monastery of the great Euthumius; that of St Chariton; that of the holy Theodosius and Cœnobiarchus; the Laura (monastic-centre) of Mar Saba; that of St John the Baptist or the Holy Trinity, and that of Abba Gerasimus near the last-mentioned. The stations and districts subject to the district of Jerusalem are the following (in which there are also Arch-priests): Bethel, Emmaus, Tekoa, St Abraham, Pater-noster, Amputh, Zephim, or Gephraim, St Sabas, and the district of the mountain of Jerusalem.

E.

The following words enter largely into the composition of Arabic names :—

'Ain (plural *'Ayún*)	Spring, fountain, well.
Bir (plural *Biyár*)	Well.
Fersh . .	Fertile plateau or table-land.
Hajar . .	Stone, rock.
Jebel . .	Mountain.
Jorf . .	Perpendicular bank of gravel eaten out by a torrent.
Khirbeh (plural *Kharabát*)	Ruins.
Magráh (or *Migráh*)	A hollow, or depression in which rain-water collects.
Magháreh .	Cave.
Nagb . .	Pass, defile.
Rás . .	Peak, brow, cape.
Seih . .	Debouchment of torrent.
Seil . .	Stream, bed of torrent.
Shagg . .	Cleft, ravine.
Shagíf . .	Fissure.
Sík . .	A narrow passage or cutting through rocks.
Tel'ah . .	Gully.
Tell . .	Mound formed of earth collected over the ruins of a perished city.
Thilmeh . .	Fissure.
'Ujrah . .	Mound.
Wády (or *Wád*)	"A hollow, a valley, a depression,—more or less deep, or wide, or long,—worn or washed by the mountain torrents or winter rains for a few months in the year."—*Stanley.*

In forming compound epithets from some natural feature or production of the locality, the words اب *abu*, "father," and امّ *umm*, "mother," are often employed.

I have adopted the pronunciation of the Bedawín Arabs throughout this volume in preference to a more consistent method of transliteration.

F.

Notes on some rock-specimens from Sinai, collected by Mr E. H. Palmer. *By the* Rev. T. G. Bonney, F.G.S.

The following is a list of the rock specimens which you kindly brought me, with a few exceptions, where either the specimen was of no particular interest, or in a state not suited for anything like an accurate description. As would naturally happen in the case of specimens which had generally to be picked up from loose fragments or broken-off exposed angles, very many of them are either decomposed or are affected to some extent by the weather. Hence I have not thought it worth while to have sections made for the microscope; preferring to wait till I could obtain specimens collected under more favourable circumstances. This however obliges me often to speak somewhat vaguely. I believe that the examination of slices from unweathered specimens would in some cases be very interesting; and I should not be surprised if several of those which I have described from the hand-specimens as igneous rocks turned out—like the so-called Alpine Granites—to be really metamorphic. I have followed the nomenclature used by Cotta.

Jebel Moneijâh. Apparently a green *Felstone;* a very similar rock to that from Jebel Hadirá.

Jebel Músa. A *Porphyritic Felstone,* of purplish red colour, with large crystals of flesh-tinted orthoclase feldspar, cracked and penetrated like the matrix, with thin veins of a dark mineral somewhat resembling hornblende—much decomposed.

Jebel Músa (1, 2, 3,). A coarse *Syenitic Granite* resembling Serbâl (2), (see below), but with rather more hornblende and a very little silvery mica. In two specimens the quartz inclines to a milk-white colour.

Jebel Músa (4). A similar rock, but less coarse, with flesh-coloured feldspar.

Jebel Músa (5). The same minerals, but very fine grained.

Jebel Músa (6). The same minerals and texture, but with some minute scales of mica—very possibly a metamorphic rock.

Summit of Jebel Katarínâ. *Syenitic Granite.* A rather finely and not always distinctly crystalline compound of quartz and pinkish feldspar, with small crystals of dark hornblende. I should not be surprised if on microscopic examination this turned out to be a metamorphic rock.

Wady Sa'al. *Basalt.*

Jebel Hadirá. Seems to be a green *Felstone;* apparently some epidote in it.

'Ain Hudherah (dyke running through sandstone). A purplish red crystalline igneous rock, consisting of a dark mineral (augite or hornblende?) and a feldspar which appears to be orthoclase. There is much iron; it has some resemblance to the felstones of the neighbourhood of Exeter (Pocombe).

The other specimens from 'Ain Hudherah are fine, and not very hard *Sandstones* of various colours, reddish, pinkish and brownish yellow.

Jebel Umm Shomer. *Syenitic Granite.* Pink orthoclase feldspar, quartz and a little hornblende. Mica appears to be absent from this specimen.

Jebel Abu Shejer. Quartz and orthoclase feldspar, with a little epidote, probably from a vein or node.

Summit of Serbâl (1). Two veins, one about half an inch thick, of *basalt,* breaking through a rather fine grained *Syenitic Granite* with but little hornblende.

Summit of Serbâl (2). A coarse *Syenitic Granite;* but little hornblende, much deep pink orthoclase feldspar and large irregularly crystallized grains of quartz—much decomposed.

Jebel Abu Shíah. *Graphic Granite* of pinkish colour; no mica visible on this specimen, a few specks of chlorite or hornblende.

Jebel Abu Shíah. *Tonalite* (?) Quartz, feldspar (orthoclase and triclinic) with large crystals of hornblende, also a little mica and some garnets. I suspect it is really a metamorphic rock.

Jebel Salã. *Syenite.* Pink and whitish orthoclase feldspar with apparently a very few crystals of some triclinic feldspar and a little hornblende in acicular crystals.

Jebel Salã. *Syenite.* Pale pink orthoclase feldspar with dark hornblende in about equal quantities.

Jebel Salã. Probably a metamorphic rock, colourless or pinkish quartz, glassy white feldspar, with a little hornblende in nests.

Jebel Moneijáh. Apparently a *Syenitic Granite* or *Syenite;*

chiefly hornblende and opaque-whitish orthoclase feldspar; specimens not in good condition for examination.

Wády Sigillíyeh. *Syenitic Granite.* A very pretty specimen with pale pink orthoclase feldspar.

Wády Mukatteb. Rather incoherent *Sandstones* generally fine, but with occasionally coarser grains; in colour, deep purple mottled with a lighter tint—must be very beautiful in the mass in certain lights.

Wády Umm Themáim. A hard conglomerate of rather coarse sand with subangular flinty pebbles; general colour buff; cement calcareous.

Seil Wády Dhaghádeh. Nummulite Limestone.

T. G. BONNEY.

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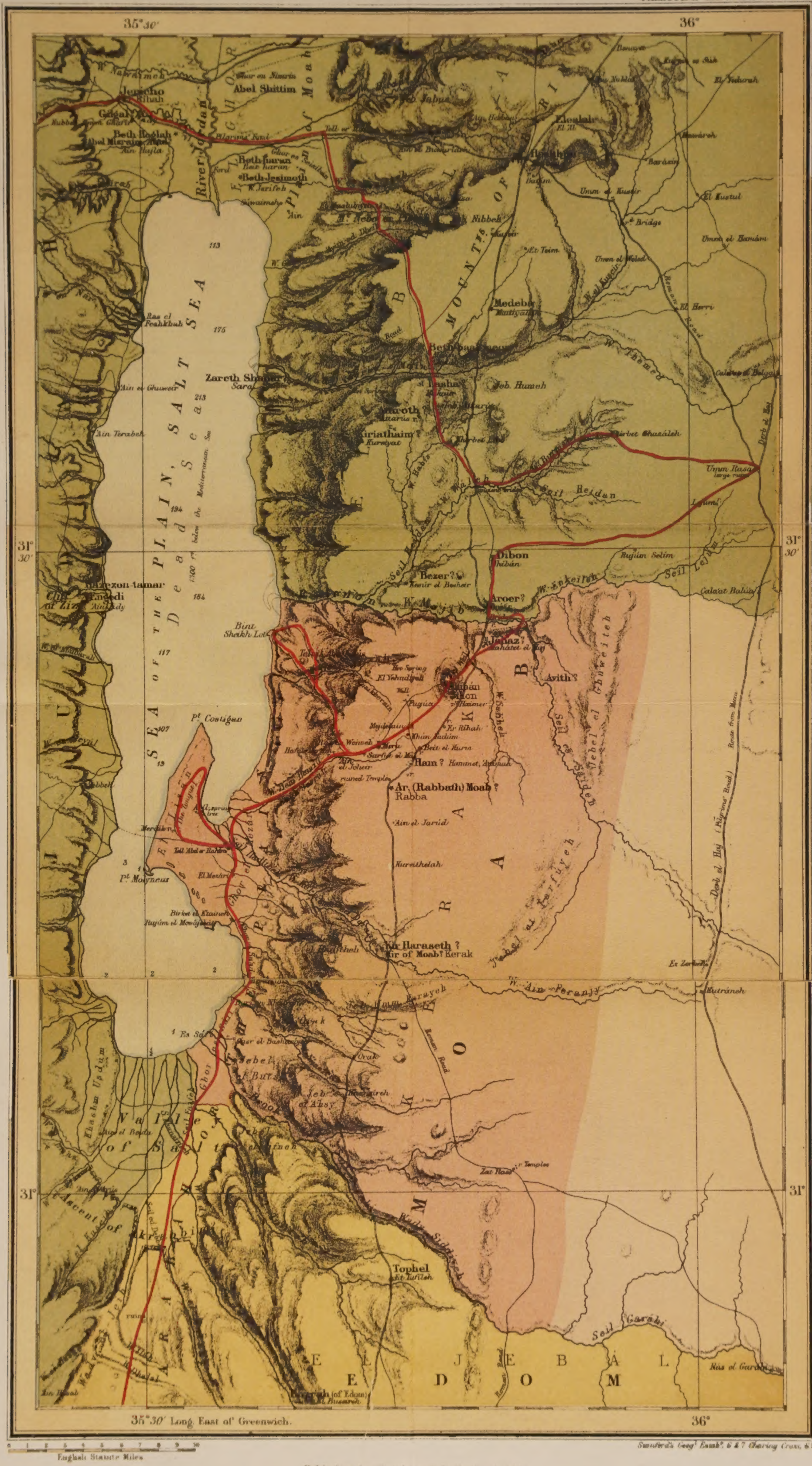

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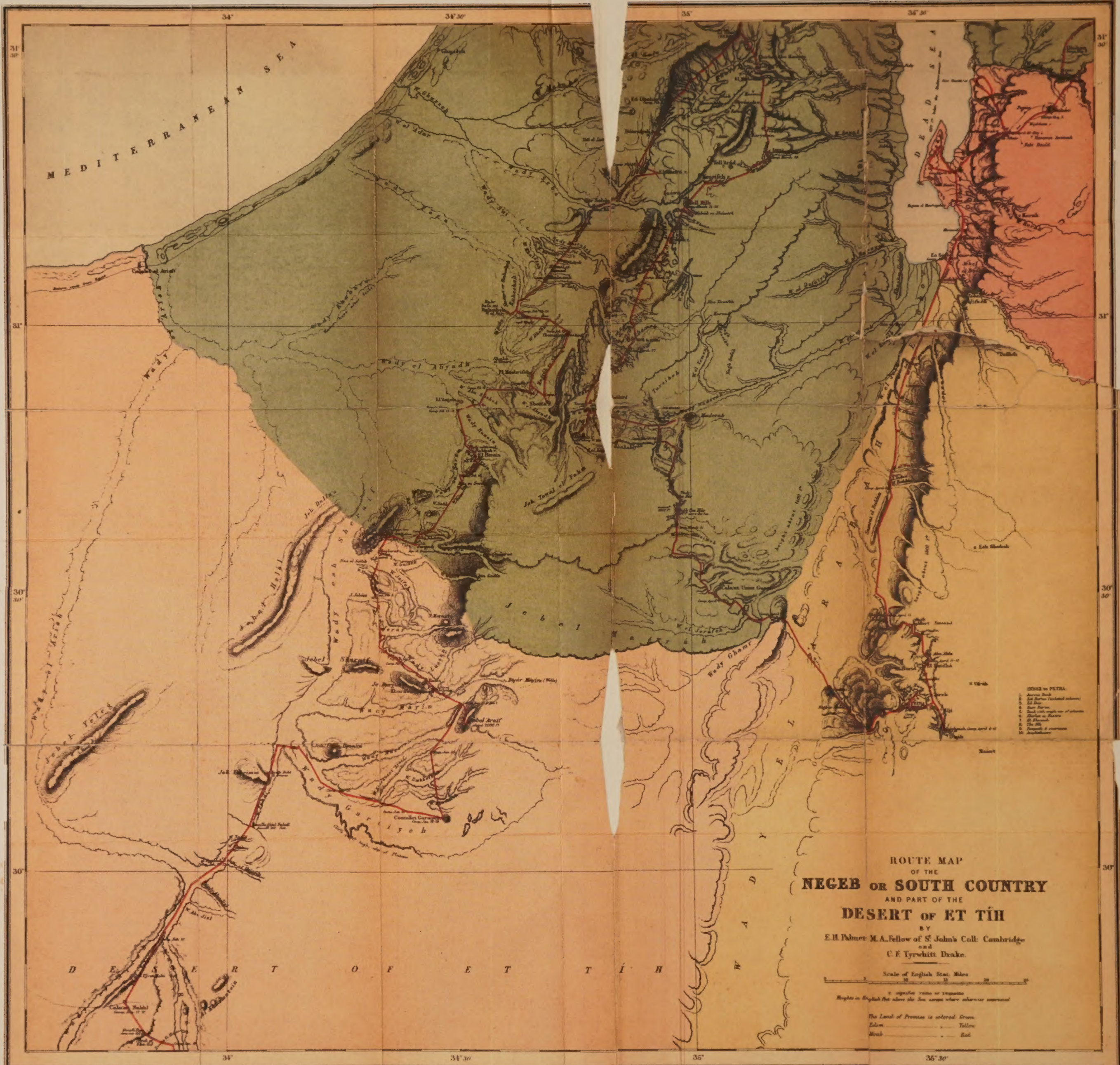

ROUTE MAP
OF THE
NEGEB OR SOUTH COUNTRY
AND PART OF THE
DESERT OF ET TÍH
BY
E. H. Palmer M.A. Fellow of S^t John's Coll: Cambridge
and
C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake.

Scale of English Stat. Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25

r. signifies ruins or remains
Heights in English Feet above the Sea except where otherwise expressed

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Edom .... " ... Yellow
Moab .... " ... Red

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